LIVING STARS / F6
Kuh's Hacienda Isabela: A farm, retreat house for praying, fasting, seminars

SPORTS / A24
Sharapova, Williams forge Australian Open final showdown

BUSINESS FRIDAY / B2-1
What active senior citizens, affluent executives and masses will buy this year

ACROSS / A13
DOJ ordered cases against Chinese poachers dropped

Virgin Komodo now pa and ma to 5 dragons

CHESTER, ENGLAND—FLORA, A KOMODO dragon who has never mated or been mixed with a male, has become a mother and father to a clutch of babies following her "immaculate conception" that stunned scientists, keepers at a British zoo announced on Wednesday.

The female Komodo, a badly endangered giant lizard, astounded keepers at Chester Zoo in

VIRGIN, A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, January 26, 2007 ★★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 49 P15 www.inquirer.net

Iloilo attack 'excessive' but cops to get awards

By TJ Burgonio

EXCESSIVE, YES, BUT awards are in order.

Policemen who stormed the Iloilo provincial capitol may have committed "excesses" in the operation, but no-

SOBLEJO, A10

GMA message in Davos: RP ripe for more trade

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND (VIA PLDT)—The Philippines is ripe for more trade and investment.

This is the message that President Macapagal-Arroyo will share with her fellow heads of state and with political, economic and civil society leaders who have come to this resort town, the highest in Europe, to attend the meeting of the World Economic Forum.

The WEF is an independent international organization founded in 1971, which is committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders to discuss and find solutions to global problems.

As the Philippines is the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Ms Arroyo is scheduled to give her opening remarks today, the third of the five-day WEF annual meeting, at Hotel Matterhof on the topic "Davos's Economic Rendezvous."

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said in a statement here that the President's participation

GMA, A4

Erap camp hits Ang for hiding plea deal

Saguisag says notice of agreement part of due process

THE ATONG ANG FAMILY HOME: Ang has offered his own residence at 18 Maaasahin St., Cariedolan Gardens, Quezon City, to pay the government for the P25-million kickback he allegedly took from the P 130-million tobacco excise tax earmarked for Boys Sor Jibrody, the house has been the subject of a writ of attachment issued by the Sandiganbayan where Ang is a co-accused in the Estrada plunder trial. RAFY LIMA

By Norman Bordadora

THE CAMP OF DEposed President Joseph Estrada yesterday slammed Charlie "Atong" Ang for his failure to give Estrada's defense lawyers a copy of his plea bargain agreement with state prosecutors before he submitted it to the Sandiganbayan.

"The hidden agenda is discovered as the intent was not even to give us a copy of an important document that may affect our client. What has withdrawn such gesture?" said Rene Saguisag, Estrada's lead defense counsel.

The agreement, if approved by the Sandiganbayan, would allow Ang to enter a plea of guilty for the lesser offense of bribery, which carries a six-year prison term, and avoid a possible sentence of 40 years for plunder.

In exchange, Ang would enter in the prosecution of cases "in which he has personal knowledge."

In the plea bargain he submitted to the Sandiganbayan on Wednesday, Ang acknowledged that he and Estrada conspired in 1998 to "divert" P130 million in

ERAP, A13

IN THE KNOW

Swiss professor started forum in '71

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM is an independent organization that hosts an annual meeting of leaders to address global issues.

The organization's prototype was initiated in 1971 by Swiss academician Klaus Schwab. He gathered European business leaders in Davos, Switzerland, to discuss global management practices.

The successful conference

DAVOS, A6

US official mobbed by Muslim kids

By Christine O. Avendaño and Veh Contreras

THE HIGHEST UNITED STATES OFFICIAL TO visit Mindanao in recent memory, Karen Hughes, undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, flew to Jolo yesterday "to see first hand" what the Philippine and US governments were doing to win the fight against terrorism, according to an official privy to Hughes' itinerary.

"Maybe because [Washington] would like to find out what works in Mindanao and why the US presence is welcomed there and not necessarily in other places," said the official of Hughes' visit but requesting anonymity for lack of clearance to speak on the matter.

Hughes was mobbed by hundreds of Muslim schoolchildren waving paper Philippine and US flags after she stepped out of a military helicopter in Maimbung, Sulu. Security remained tight for her though.

"Well, it's very heartwarming to see the warm smiles," she said, when asked how her reception differed from that in other Muslim societies.

Reuters quoted Hughes as saying that US operations in Mindanao should be a model for other parts of the world.

US President George W. Bush had conveyed his gratitude to the Arroyo administration for its fight against terrorism through Hughes, according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Hughes is a longtime advisor of Bush and one of his closest confidantes.

US OFFICIAL, A11

HEROES IN HEROES HALL: President Arroyo hosts a thanksgiving dinner and awarding rites at the Palace's Heroes Hall for the 78 military officers and men who had been winning the antiterrorist campaign, particularly against the Abu Sayyaf group. They were all promoted on the spot. Flanking Ms Arroyo are AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. Also present is Army Chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino Jr. (back row, 3rd from left). LYNDON

Leviste lawyers decry new probe as an 'injustice'

THE LAWYERS OF BUSINESSMAN ANTONIO "Boy" Leviste are protesting a Makati court's order for a reinvestigation of the fatal shooting of Rolando de las Alas and a review of the decision to indict Leviste for the lesser offense of homicide.

Lawyers Manuel Singson and Allan Gepty said a reinvestigation, which could result in the charges against Leviste being upgraded to murder, would be an injustice to their client.

They said the reinvestigation was "only a force and talon made to persecute, not prosecute, the accused for the crime of murder."

The family of Rafael de las Alas, Leviste's trusted aide who was shot by the former Batangas governor on Jan. 12 after an alleged argument, asked the Department of Justice to order a review of the case as they believed De las Alas had been murdered. Leviste has claimed the shooting was an act of self-defense.

Leviste's lawyers said the complainants were the "improper party" to seek a reinvestigation.

"The right to a reinvestigation belongs to the accused because he was not afforded a preliminary investigation," they said in the appeal they filed with Makati Judge Elmo Alameda, reiterating the oral arguments they made in open court last Thursday.

Leviste, who underwent inquest proceedings when he surrendered after the shooting, was the one who should ask for

LEVISTE, A13

Slain Abu Sayyaf leader lived in floral 'paradise'

By Dona Pazzibugan

ABU SULAIMAN, THE NOTORIOUS deputy of Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani, had been living in "paradise" in the jungles of Sulu before troops finally caught up with him on Jan. 16.

Sulaiman (real name: Amad Ajani Said) was described by the military as the chief planner of the Dos Palmas kidnapping in 2001, the Sibuguey Superferry 14 in 2004 and the Valentine's Day bombings in Makati, Davao and General Santos cities in 2005.

The last moments of Sulaiman were recounted in a news conference yesterday by soldiers who on Wednesday night received medals and promotions from President Macapagal-Arroyo in ceremonies in Malacañang.

"You are the soldiers of the people in the finest tradition of the uniform," Ms Arroyo said.

"You have repulsed the armed terrorism of the people by the gallant shield of the Filipino soldier." She said the remaining Abu Sayyaf guerrillas were just rem-

nants. "Bersos na lang sila sa mga. Nahahabol na natin yung mga ito (They are just rags. You have them headed)," she said.

In all, 78 soldiers and officers received awards during the affair that was also attended by visiting US Undersecretary of State Karen Hughes.

Army 1st Lt. Alexander Aljunes, head

SLAIN, A14

A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2007

LOTTO 6/42
19 6 1 0 2 9 4 3
5 4 7 6 0 8
SUPERLOTTO 6/49
2 3 21 22 30 49
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Second
FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Sotto, Oreta may join admin

By Christine O. Avendaño and TJ Burgonio

OPPOSITIONISTS VICENTE SOTTO III AND Tessie Aquino-Oreta, who have joined the Nacionalista People's Coalition (NPC) political party, might just end up being part of the administration ticket in the senatorial race.

SOTTO

Court allows Gringo to file bid

By Tarra Quismundo

ROMANES

12 governors lead big exodus to Lakas

By Gil Cabunoy Jr. and Jeremaiah Opiniano

FILIPINO-INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN THE PHILIPPINES, INC.

Congratulates

Ambassador Rajeet Mitter and the people of the Republic of India on their REPUBLIC DAY Celebration January 26, 2007

NARESH MANSUKHANI
President, FICCP, Inc.

CONG. FERJENEL G. BIRON, M.D.
Chairman, FICCP, Inc.

Election automation now a law despite Comelec reservations

By Gil Cabunoy Jr. and Jeremaiah Opiniano

ANOTHER ABOUT-FACE

Slain solon's driver recants

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE DRIVER OF murdered Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. has changed his story and is now saying the three soldiers suspected in the killing had nothing to do with it.

Alex Fernandez, Bersamin's driver, has filed an affidavit saying that Bersamin's brother, Antero Bersamin, and Pinukpuk Mayor Conrado Dangoy were not in the scene of the crime when Bersamin and his bodyguard, Adolfo Ortega, were shot dead outside the Carmel Church in Dolores city last May 16.

He has now reportedly left the compromise and file after the dismissal of his predecessor.

Dagos, a former soldier, is the vice mayor of La Paz, Abra, and a supporter of Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, the alleged mastermind of the killing, according to another suspect, Enrico Funding.

Funding himself has retracted his story, saying he had been coerced into naming Valera by police investigators.

But Chavez Bersamin, the late Bersamin's nephew, said it was Gonzales who had invited the suspects to the police, which led to the door he first reminded the suspects.

"Alex gave the investigators documents in his first statement as if I don't know what he is talking about," Chavez said.

Yet, there is someone who can Fernandez inside the church," she added. "We are now gathering our evidence against them."

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) yesterday denied it had coerced witnesses into linking Dagos and Funding to the killing of Bersamin.

Director Eliseo Cruz, CIDG chief, cited the CIDG cohesiveness among the killing of Bersamin, and he learned that Gonzales had told other aides that was under Sgt. Eugene Mateo, chief of Task Force Abra, had acted as aide. Sen. Aquino Pimentel Jr. upon Dagos and Funding.

"I don't know about that. My guidance to my investigators is that I will not allow any coercion unless primary witnesses from witnesses," Director Cruz said.

Yesterday, Gonzales's lawyer, Ferdinand Ignacio, senior PNP Lt. Col., Gonzales' counsel during questioning by the CIDG, cited to counsel his client to sign documents implicating Dagos and Funding in the murder.

In his affidavit, Gonzales said he refused to sign the completed because he did not see Dagos and Funding, accused cohorts Bersamin was killed.

Ignacio also said his client "experienced traumatic happenings that made him believe that he is being harassed to detrimental to his own people..."

Allen Bersamin was shot, homeless and harassed given his own gun that was fired at and evaluated by the prosecutor.

Gonzales used to be the driver of the slain congressman's younger brother, Cesar of upstate, successor Austere Garcia Bersamin. He drives the vice congressman to the last election.

Under Bersamin told Gonzales, who began working for the family in last week, "He had made himself aware more her hatred of the two persons."

With reports from Nestor Burgos

Release of 24 Pinoy seamen 'very likely'

By Veh Cadenas

THE "EARLY RELEASE" OF 24 Filipino seafarers held hostage in Nigeria has become very likely, more than two days after they have succeeded in drawing international attention to the plight of their people, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs' latest assessment of the week-old crisis.

"There is now a strong presumption of an early release," DFA officials who monitored developments said. "It has been announced that the abductors' only intention is to highlight the economic plight and problems of the people of the Niger Delta."

"Things are looking up on the international front, they may make the release easy as they have been in the hostages."

In a briefing yesterday DFA spokesperson Ed Malaki said Philippine ambassador to Nigeria Montemayor Dupo arrived in Port-au-Prince on Wednesday to get first-hand knowledge on ongoing negotiations with the abductors, identified as militants belonging to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta.

Dupo met with Delta State Gov. James Ibori and the chief government negotiator, Interior Secretary Ango Abdullahi reported.

The 24 Filipinos were seized by the militants on Jan. 23 as their Cessnas crossed creeks mixed from river 8 control Nigerian waters into Warri, Nigeria. Two of them were reportedly dropped off a nearby offshore while crews were kept as hostages aboard the anchored ship.

NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM: Gov. Edgardo Angara and Cruz Don Bagasing give food packs to students of the Pinoy Schools Elementary School in Sampaloc, in part of the National Feeding Program of the DSWD. INQUIRER

Judge gets 25 years for extortion

By Norman Bordadora

A SANDIGANBAYAN court judge was sentenced to 25 years in prison after the Sandiganbayan found him guilty of extortion and graft (Read)...

The Sandiganbayan Third Division ruling Judge Bibiano Bautista's claim that he was framed when he was caught by the National Bureau of Investigation accepting marked money from a suspect in 2003.

The court had ruled against Bautista and Amelia Calderon for PHP50,000 in exchange for the judge dismissing a homicide case against the suspect's father in a case arraignment and simple, small records. Bautista...

The ruling's decision the NBI about the judge's misconduct. PHP [illegible] upon immediate payment money and dismissed as correspondent upon arrest.

₱100M sought for nutrition drive

THIRTY PERCENT OF FILIPINO CHILDREN under five years old are stunted or too short for their age while another six percent are underweight, that is, despite their size, as a result of poor nutrition, they are also underweight.

Citing studies on malnourished children, Angara said the malnutrition problem has "broad and irreparable effects on children and in turn on the country's human resources."

Angara, a former president of the University of the Philippines, said that malnutrition, or acute or chronic, contributes to "stunted growth, blindness and impaired intellectual development."

He called on the government to allocate P100 million a year to institutionalize a school feeding program that would provide students in public elementary schools with breakfast, milk, vitamin supplements, fortified snacks and high-quality packed lunch.

"Malnutrition is our country's number one nutritional problem and is the root cause of many other problems," he said.

Angara said he is also proposing that the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and the Department of Health (DOH) jointly implement the program.

Angara also said he is also proposing that the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and the Department of Health (DOH) jointly implement the program.

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Corrections

DE LAS ALAS SHOOTING

Leviste bucks new probe

THE LAWYERS OF RUSHERMAN ANTONIO "Tony" Leviste are preventing a Makati court's order for a reinvestigation of the fatal shooting of Rafael de las Alas and a review of the decision to indict Leviste for the latest offense of homicide.

Lawyers Manuel Dagdag and Allan Empleo said a reinvestigation, which could result in the charges against Leviste being upgraded to murder, would be an injustice to their client.

They said the reinvestigation was "only a farce and futile exercise to prosecute, not prosecute, the accused for the crime of murder."

The family of Rafael de las Alas-Lozano (central aide who was shot by the former Batangas governor on Jan. 12 after an alleged argument, asked the Department of Justice to order a review of the case in Lipa, believed De las Alas had been murdered. Leviste has claimed the shooting was an act of self-defense.

Leviste's lawyers said the complainants were the "instigator party" to seek a reinvestigation.

"The right to a reinvestigation belongs to the accused because he was not afforded a preliminary investigation," they said in the report they filed with Makati Judge Elmo Alameda, reiterating the oral arguments they made in open court last Thursday.

Leviste, who underwent inquest proceedings when he surrendered after the shooting, was the one who should ask for a reinvestigation and not the private complainants, they said.

Leviste's lawyers also questioned the impartiality of the public prosecutors assigned to conduct the review, citing a statement of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez of "evident premeditation" in the incident.

'Has my conscience'

The assigned fiscal, Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, denied this in open court on Thursday and said Gonzalez "is not my consultant" or "has my instructions."

The defense lawyers called on Alameda to stop the 2:00 hearing superseding the court. They said Velasco had already begun the reinvestigation even before the court order granting the complainant's request for reinvestigation.

"They said Velasco has already subpoenaed concerned parties, asking them to appear at a hearing at the justice department on Jan. 31.

"Neither the Secretary of Justice, the State Prosecutor, nor the Fiscal may interfere with the judge's discretion of the case, much less dispose upon the court their opinion regarding the guilt or innocence of the accused, for the court is the sole judge of fact," the lawyers said.

The lawyers also scoffed at the suggestion that the shooting was premeditated, saying there was no evidence to the incident.

Velasco was instructed to give statements included employees at the Leviste-owned building, the LPG, who found the armed victim of Leviste and De las Alas inventory before the shooting.

"It is not my duty to establish from mere suppositions that the killing was perpetrated by members in this case at bar, where the manner of attack could not be proven, so said, therefore, should be given the benefit of the doubt," the lawyers said in their motion.

Defense rebuttal

Citing jurisprudence involving similar circumstances, the defense also offered its rebuttal to the prosecutor's contention that the victim was given the benefit of the doubt of the fatal act or evidence of murder.

"There are other guardian wounds on the frontal area. And to theorize that the guardian wound at the back was the last shot is not only physically impossible but also highly improbable. This is because if it were so, the trajectory of the victim was to fall flat on the ground. Hence, it is impossible for him to sustain the other guardian wounds in front," the lawyers said. Tarra Quismundo

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Please be informed that the Royal Netherlands Embassy will relocate its office as of 29 January 2007 the address will be:

Royal Netherlands Embassy
26th Floor Equitable PCI Bank Tower
8751 Paseo de Roxas
Makati City, Metro Manila
Philippines

General	
Telephone	**+63 2 786 6666**
Fax	**+63 2 786 6680**
Visa	
Visa info	**+63 2 786 6655**
Fax	**+63 2 786 6644**

www.netherlandsembassy.ph

Lay forum kicks off heart confab

A LAY FORUM ON THE threatening conditions that complicate pregnancies and children's problems or dysfunctions, will be the kick-off session for the 12th Asian Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and the Philippine Heart Association (PHA).

Renowned local experts will serve as resource persons for the lay forum which is scheduled on Saturday, Feb. 3 to 5 p.m. at Pantalan Room, Supplies 1 and 2, Crowne Plaza Galleria (Manila) Hotel in Ortigas, Pasig City.

It is a pre-convention activity in view of a series of public education campaigns conducted by PSH and PAHA on both organizations pursue programs to assist in counteracting the upsurge of cardiovascular diseases.

All the topics on the lay forum including high blood pressure, cholesterol, eclampsia, obesity, smoking and stress will be tackled by a panel of selected medical experts who will give short lectures followed by an open-to-the-floor question-and-answer session with all the participants. Participants will be given on how to combat these risk factors and prevent heart attacks and strokes.

The expert panel includes Dr. Nelson Mikkelsen, PSH president; Dr. Jesse Ruivivar, Mr. Felix Montalvo, a nutritionist and Ms. Napoleon Gutierrez, a physical therapist. The overall coordinator of the forum is Dr. Rose Alba Ty.

GLOBAL AGENCY OF THE YEAR

Social officials of the Euro RSCG Worldwide region after being named Global Agency of the Year by prestigious advertising trade publication Advertising Age of the USA and Campaign of the United Kingdom. From left are Monique Ignacio, president; Charlie Agsaoy, chairman; Ed Maya Jr., managing partner and chief operating officer; and Nestor Ignacio, managing director and chief creative officer.

Cayetano bid for Arroyo bank waiver a joke, says Palace

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG HAS JUMPED INTO THE melee stirred up by Senate President Manuel Villar's demand for President Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband to sign a waiver on his global bank secrecy case or "joke."

"What he is demanding from the First Gentleman to sign a waiver to scrutinize the bank accounts of the First Family is not allowed," Villar Jr. said. "What Villar is doing is a joke. Can the accusers tell me about how the case for it occurring? Why can't he find intermediate solutions?" said Agnote.

Agnote said that Cayetano was probably serving as designated hitman because he got "burned". He said that he accused the First Gentleman on the Germán Bank accounts and now he wanted to use this opportunity on the First Gentleman.

"I think what he is doing is foolish. What is happening now is unconstitutional...there was no formality during the hearing. He (he) should have not allowed (respect) to (to) Arroyo (and) (spouse) respect each other," Agnote said.

She (he) said he would not blame if the First Gentleman marched in same his voice "because we are really annoying."

Agnote is confident that plans to impeach the President for a third time using Cayetano's evidence would not prosper.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, January 26, 2007
Ss. Timothy and Titus, Bishops
1st Reading: 2 Tim 1:1-8 (or Ti 1:1-5)
Gospel: Luke 10:1-9

"The Lord appointed 72 other disciples and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he himself was to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is rich, but the workers are few. So you must ask the Lord who is in charge of the harvest to send workers to his harvest. Go! I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Do not carry a purse or bag or sandals, and do not stop to greet anyone along the road.

Whenever you enter a house, first say, 'May God's peace be in this house.' If a friend of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon that person; but if not, the blessing will return to you. Stay in that house eating and drinking what they provide, for the worker deserves to be paid. Do not move from house to house.

When any city welcomes you, eat what they offer you. Heal the sick who are there and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

[...]

Fr. Tito Caluag is ordained with prayer and submission to the Body of Christ and the Bishop, and as a member of the family of bishops are the grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. They and him took care for the spirit and his faith and brought to flame in the laying on of hands by Paul in the presence of the ordained [illegible]

Fr. Tito is addressed as a son in the faith, in the Lord Jesus, by Paul, prayerful and adult, and encouraged to share the faith and knowledge that he has been given by growing in it and passing it onto others. Always the great and peace of Christ is with him (all of him).

[...]

Fr. The harvest is waiting in every generation for those with strength, generosity and gratitude to bring it in. Jesus said: "I am, (we) for love—the usual way to do any spiritual ministry, evangelization, preaching, teaching means giving community and to go before the Word and the community—as Timothy and Titus did (as Lois and Eunice did) as all (you) are called to do. He are to bring the News of Christ, healing and hope, and the words of the Gospel. That is essential. That is our calling, our sending and our hope.

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Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITATION OF FOREIGN OBSERVERS IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 14, 2007 SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.

PRESENT:
ABALOS, Benjamin S. — Chairman
BORRA, Rene Victor Luis C. — Commissioner
TUASON, Jr., Florentino A. — Commissioner
BRAVO-JR., Rufino S. — Commissioner
GARMENTE, Nicon V. — Commissioner
FERRER, Nicodemo T. — Commissioner

Promulgated: 11 January, 2007

RESOLUTION NO. 7882

WHEREAS, foreigners or groups of foreigners may be coming to observe the May 14, 2007 National and Local Elections;

WHEREAS, there is a necessity to regulate the activities of foreign observers in the elections;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7166 and other election laws, the Commission on Elections has RESOLVED to promulgate as it hereby RESOLVES to promulgate, as follows:

SECTION 1. **Accreditation** - Any foreigner or foreign group, organization, committee or association, representing government or private interests, who may want to observe the May 14, 2007 elections, shall file an application for accreditation with the Commission through the Director IV, Education and Information Department. The deadline for filing application for accreditation by foreign observers shall be on April 30, 2007.

SECTION 2. **Online Filing of Applications for Accreditation** - Applications for accreditation may be filed online using the online application form on the COMELEC website (http://www.comelec.gov.ph), and the website of the COMELEC-IVED (http://www.bagongbalota.com).

SECTION 3. **Documentary requirements** - The application shall be supported by the following documents:

a. Duly accomplished information sheet;
b. Two (2) recently taken (1"x2" colored photographs of the applicant; and
c. Endorsement by the ambassador or Consul of the home country of the applicants.

SECTION 4. **Identification Cards** - Upon approval of the application, the Commission shall issue individual identification cards to the accredited foreign observers.

SECTION 5. **Privileges** - Duly accredited observers shall have the following privileges:

A. BEFORE ELECTION DAY

1. Request any official of the government, representatives of registered political parties, organizations or coalitions, candidates or their representatives, representatives of media, private firms or organizations, any political party or candidate for interviews or briefing on the coming electoral exercise;
2. Observe the continuing registration and validation of voters and other election preparation activities at the offices of the election officers.

B. ON ELECTION DAY

Observe the conduct of elections in any locality, interview voters, political leaders and other individuals outside the polling place, and document these by means of audio, visual or audio-visual recordings, subject to the prohibition under section 5 hereof.

C. AFTER THE ELECTION

1. Observe the counting of votes by the Boards of Election Inspectors and canvassing of results of votes conducted by the municipality, city, provincial, district and regional Boards of Canvassers; and
2. Observe the canvassing proceedings of the Commission acting as the National Board of Canvassers for Senators.

SECTION 6. **Prohibited Acts** - It shall be unlawful for any foreigner, whether juridical or natural person to:

1. Act any candidate or political party directly or indirectly;
2. Take part or influence in any manner the election;
3. Contribute or make any expenditure in connection with any election campaign or partisan political activity;
4. Enter any polling place during voting hours; and
5. Enter places reserved for voters or for the Board of Election Inspectors or to mingle and talk with the voters inside the polling place.

SECTION 7. **Penalty of violation** - Any violation of the above provisions shall be punishable with one to six years of imprisonment and deportation which shall be enforced after the service of the prison term has been served.

SECTION 8. **Effectivity** - This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SECTION 9. **Dissemination** - The Education and Information Department shall implement this Resolution, cause its publication and furnish copies to all Regional Election Directors, Provincial Election Supervisors, Election Officers, all political parties, all candidates, Philippine Information Agency, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, which shall cause dissemination thereof to its foreign service establishments and to representatives of foreign countries in the Philippines, for their information and guidance.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

REMBRANDT C. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

RONALD S. BRAVO-JR.
Commissioner

RENE V. GARMENTE
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2007

DPWH exec's dismissal affirmed

By Armand N. Nocum

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS AFFIRMED the dismissal of a Department of Public Works and Highways official—who was once linked to ousted President Joseph Estrada—for failing the government's lifestyle check.

In a 16-page decision, the appellate court upheld the decision of the Ombudsman dismissing Regina M. Public Works Director Romeo G. Pangasinan for allegedly amassing some P20 million more than his properties illegally.

Court of Appeals Associate Justice Aurora Santiago-Lagman, who penned the decision, found Pangasinan guilty of grave misconduct and dishonesty and affirmed the Ombudsman's right to dismiss him.

"It is manifest that the Ombudsman has the authority to dismiss petitioner (Pangasinan) from government service, as it has legally done so in this case. It is administrative case, a finding of guilt would have to be contrasted for as long as it is supported by substantial evidence —," the court's 14th Division decision said.

The decision was concurred in by Associate Justices Bienvenido L. Reyes and Ramon M. Bato Jr.

Pangasinan (not enlisted his retirement benefits and is perpetually disqualified from the government service.

The court noted that substantial evidence was defined as relevant proof that a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.

Separate case

"The gauge of substantial evidence is satisfied where there is reasonable ground to believe the petitioner is guilty of misconduct, even if the evidence might not be overwhelming. In the absence of a clear showing of grave abuse of discretion, such finding (said) not be disturbed," the appellate court said.

A separate case against Pangasinan involving the forfeiture of unlawfully acquired properties is pending before the Sandiganbayan. Pangasinan was charged with illegally acquiring property whose worth was classified out of proportion to his salary and other lawful income.

To his retirement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) for the year 2001, Pangasinan had declared a net worth of P11,200,509.

But he was found to have concealed real properties with a total worth of at least P40,556,309 between the years 1994 and 2001.

Between 1986 and 2001, his total income was reportedly only P5,310,818.99.

Its sum, the properties, together with their fruits and/or proceeds in the total amount of P5,000,007.00, constitute unexplained wealth forfeitable in favor of the government under Republic Act No. 1379, said the Court of Appeals.

Pangasinan reportedly failed to include in his SALN properties such as a house in San Barbara, Laguna; a four-story building in Sta. Cruz Manila; a house in Ayala Alabang; a residential lot in Laguna, and a 2-bedroom house in Pasadena, California.

Pangasinan was once reported to have fled to Canada after the ouster of then President Estrada's executive home in Pagsanjan, Laguna. But both Estrada and Pangasinan denied this.

Foreign-funded PW projects post record disbursement

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND Highways (DPWH) said yesterday it posted a 11.6-percent disbursement rate in foreign-funded projects in 2006, its best infrastructure performance in 16 years.

According to the DPWH 2006 annual report, the "significant achievement," especially in the implementation of foreign-assisted projects, were the result of reforms implemented by the agency.

The project implementation office (PIO) of the DPWH said in a press statement that its projects reached a disbursement level of P484 billion, surpassing its 2006 target of P350 million by 87% million or 18 percent. The previous three-year average was $255 million based on portfolio reviews of the National Economic Development Authority (Neda).

Neda defines disbursement rate as the percentage of a target disbursement for a given year agreed upon by the DPWH and an international banking agency.

The PIO record-last improved internal management procedures, streamlined land disbursements, and accelerated construction and maintenance of its projects resulted in a record accomplishment compared with the mediocre performance since the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

Increased revenue

"The feat was achieved as the DPWH rode on the economic cues of the government's increased revenue collections and improved fiscal position," PIO said.

PIO also attributed the department's accomplishments to the leadership of Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane.

Among the major projects completed in 2006 is the World Bank-assisted National Road Improvement Project Phase 1 which was pilot-implemented on 984 km of national roads and bridges.

The PIO also said the major reforms carried in 2005 included an improved procurement system with integrated civil works contractor registry, financial management, internal control and audit.

It also cited sustained compliance with good governance policies and integrity action programs, as well as the enhanced right-of-way development program with the 2006 Code of Conduct for officials and employees.

The PIO said this was the reason why DPWH was ranked eighth among 70 agencies by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) and was awarded with a Certificate of Recognition presented by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Ebdane for implementing PAGC anti-corruption compliance measures.

It said its anti-corruption program reached as far as the filing of charges against three officials. It added that 18 cases were investigated.

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KAMPI MAN IN LEYTE. The hands of Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (center) are raised by Kampi leaders following his oath taking as party member at the Manila Polo Club in Makati. The Kampi officials are (from left) Rep. Felix Alfelor, Kampi national president Rep. Luis Villafuerte, Kampi Secretary General Emigdio Tanjuatco and Rep. Jose Solis.

Kampi picks a Romualdez to challenge Petilla in Leyte

By Christine Avendaño

THE ADMINISTRATION PARTY, THE KABALIKAT NG MALAYANG PILIPINAS (Kampi), has dropped the Petilla clan and picked a member of the Romualdez clan to lead the party in the first district of Leyte.

Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, 32, a son of Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, a brother of former First Lady Imelda Marcos, was yesterday sworn in as the Kampi member and candidate in the congressional elections for the first district of Leyte. He will challenge incumbent Rep. Remedios Petilla of the ruling Lakas-CMD.

The election fight will pit two of Leyte's dominant political clans. Petilla is a member of the Ildefonsa family, a much more powerful Leyte political clan which has dominated politics in much of the province for generations. Petilla's son is governor of Leyte. Various members of the clan serve as mayors and congressmen representing districts in the province's other districts and towns.

Following the downfall of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the exile and prosecution of the dictator's extended family, the Romualdezes ceased to be a political force in Leyte, with only one member of the clan, Imelda's brother, Alfredo, once holding political office as governor of Tacloban City.

Kampi national president Rep. Luis Villafuerte, who administered the oath, said Martin would bring a new brand of politics to the province.

"He was one of those young advocates for responsible corporate governance with his stint as director and later chair of the very profitable Equitable-PCI Bank," Villafuerte said.

He said a "talented-set for business" would be the best thing for Leyte which needs no human resources, including untapped geothermal energy fields and agriculture and marine products.

Martin, a lawyer, said he was following in the footsteps of his father, Kokoy, who was governor of the province for almost 20 years and later served as ambassador to the United States.

"Six out of seven mayors from the district are with us and this is only the beginning of a series of oath-taking ceremonies that will take place in the first district," said Martin, who has been appointed district chair of Kampi in the province.

Those mayors from Leyte's first district—Teodoro Petilla of Palo, Soren Iñiguez of Tolosa, Jose Ma. Veloso of Dagami, Hector Ibil of Tanauan and Melchor Quintanilla of Inopacan—were on hand for the swearing-in yesterday which was held at the Manila Polo Club.

Martin said he was now in consultations with various people to find out what the needs of his district are.

Similar note in the spotlight last year during the much-publicized and still continuing boardroom fight at the Equitable PCI Bank, where he is now vice chair. He also chairs the family-controlled Benguet Corp.

Accordingly, his brother, Benjamin Philip Romualdez, the Benguet Corp. president, Martin has the ruling to serve as he went to work for the family's cultural in the province upon their return from the United States.

"He served as dean of the law school department of the Divine Word College in Tacloban and later had his private law practice before going into the corporate world and joined the PHINMA Group," he said.

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Erap wants to visit ma weekly

FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to allow him to visit his ailing 101-year-old mother on a weekly basis.

In a manifestation before the antigraft court, Estrada's lawyer Jesse Angeles said his client had learned that his mother Mary Eleneo's condition was has deteriorating.

The Sandiganbayan Special Third Division had denied Estrada on plunder and perjury charges had allowed him occasional visits to his mother to her North Greenhills, San Juan home because of her failing health.

It had only required Estrada to give the court the name whereabouts he wanted to see his mother's condition. Shereen Bordadora

GMA party could play football in chartered jet

By Nikko Dizon

IMAGINE THE COMFORT OF A LONG FLIGHT, flight with less than 90 co-passengers on a private jet.

Yesterday President Macapagal-Arroyo and her party of 52 took an Airbus 340 airplane, chartered from Philippine Airlines (PAL), for a 15-hour flight to Zurich in Switzerland to attend the World Economic Forum.

The airplane has a seating capacity of more than 300.

With so much space, airport observers quipped that the President's party could play football inside the aircraft.

Smallest delegation

A source told the Inquirer that of the President's trips to Europe this was her smallest delegation.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo is the only member of the President's family accompanying her to Davos.

Members of her delegation include presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye, Trade Secretary Peter Favila, Presidential Security Group chief Col. Romeo Poquiz and Brig. Gen. Oscar Rabusa.

The Inquirer learned that six people, including the President and her husband, were seated in first class, five in business class, and the rest stayed in the economy section.

Misbehaving chevron PAL flights for the President's trips to Europe. One of the most notable was the trip to the Vatican in April 2005 when she paid her last respects to the late Pope John Paul II.

PAL does not have regular flights to Europe.

PAL JS 001 took off from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Continental Terminal 3 shortly after 6 a.m.

She is scheduled to return on Sunday.

OFF TO DAVOS: President Arroyo boards a chartered PAL Airbus 340 to attend the World Economic Forum in the resort town of Davos, Switzerland. The President left with a party of 52 on a plane that accommodates more than 300 passengers. AFP PHOTO

PICTURESQUE Swiss Alpine resort of Davos, the venue of the five-day World Economic Forum which began on Wednesday. AFP PHOTO

GMA message i RP ripe for mo

From page A1

now "a singular opportunity for her and the Philippines to address the major movers and shakers of the business world, political economy and civil society."

90 countries

Some 2,400 participants from 90 countries are participating in the meeting, including 24 heads of state, 81 Cabinet ministers, religious and media leaders and heads of nongovernment organizations.

Around half are business leaders from the forum's select membership, which comprises 1,000 top companies from around the world and across all economic fields.

The leaders include Eric Schmidt, chief executive officer of Google Inc., Brian Brodrick Gamache, chair and chief executive officer of Saudi Arabian Mining Co., Ivan F. Boesky, CEO of Investcorp's Philadelphia-based William Lauder III of Microsoft Corp.

Romulo said it was important for the business leaders to realize that the Philippines and the region were making significant strides in improving their economies.

He said the Philippines, in particular, was expected to post a 5.7 percent growth in gross domestic product this year due to good macroeconomic fundamentals.

Inflation has remained at single-digit levels and investors' confidence has gone up, which bears expectations that the Philippines would be able to balance its budget, or raise enough revenue to cover expenses, as early as next year, Romulo said.

Riding high

The Philippines is also riding high on the successful ranging this month of the Asean Summit in Cebu, where leaders pledged greater cooperation toward integrating their economies, in the same way that European nations created the European Union.

"These developments enable us to tell the Filipino business that the Philippines is ripe for more trade and development," Romulo said.

Ms Arroyo will be joined in the session by Trade Secretary Peter E. Favila, Indonesian Trade Minister Mari Pangestu, Vietnamese Industry Minister Vuong Dinh Hue, Asian Development Bank President Haruhiko Kuroda and Mr Ava Mahyuta CEO Anthony F. Fernandes.

Also joining them are Gosniel Ardeshidar, CEO of the Government Savings Bank of Thailand; Nobuhiko Morita, managing director of Japan Bank for International Cooperation; Cornelio Sommaruga, secretary general of the Malaysian Trade Union Congress; and Dunin Wiranatha, CEO of the Japan External Trade Organization.

Asean's new future

Ms Arroyo will also discuss 'Asean's 40 years...A New Forum," together with Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

Facilitating the discussion is Michael J. Elliott, editor of Time International and the leaders, who will also be joined by Lloyd Steward, who will exchange the views to be presented by the three heads of state.

Steward is a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Indonesia and sits on its board.

Meeting with CEOs

Ms Arroyo was scheduled to arrive here yesterday at 4 p.m. (1 a.m. in Manila), and would then meet with Skype Building SA chair Maurice Stucki.

Skype, based in Luxembourg, Switzerland, is one of the world's biggest players in the tech industry.

Swiss professor s

From page A1

ked Schwab to create the European Management Forum, which changed its name to the World Economic Forum in 1987 and has been under the supervision of the Swiss Federal Government.

Locale makes for good security

The annual meeting hosted by the organization is attended by more than 2,000 business, religious, government, cultural and society leaders. Davos, a resort in eastern Switzerland known for its relaxing climate, has been the traditional venue of the meeting.

The organization says that the town's alpine location makes it easier to address the security require-

RP tycoons rate environment a priority

By TrueAccess-Dunlao

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND (THE HOP)—Philippine business leaders have joined the ranks of a growing number of business, political and civil society leaders who believe that protecting the environment and finding solutions to halt global warming should be a priority.

Ayala Corp. chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II said the business in a plenary interview here that the issues of climate change and environmental protection were consistently ranking high or on the leaders' agenda over the past few years.

Zobel participated in the seven times of the Leaders Survey of the World Economic Forum, which indicated that the number of leaders, who ranked environmental protection as a priority for businesses, is now more important.

The WEF said in a statement here that as many as one in every five of the participants believed that leaders should concentrate on protecting the environment, compared with just four years ago when they rated environmental issues as a priority.

Leaders' survey

The thrust of the Leaders survey asks participants the same questions information on the state of the world every year, to track changing priorities and perceptions on the issue-areas, which include safety, security and economic growth.

Zobel, who has been a member of the WEF since 1995 when he was named a Global Leader of Tomorrow, said the issue of climate change was "massively relevant" to the Philippines because it was hit a few months ago by supertyphoons that caused massive loss of life and property and because of the possible unpredictability of the weather.

"Those effect not only the agriculture sector, but the infrastructure sector as well," he said.

Zobel added that people in general were cultivating to grapple with the effects of global warming, although he raised a marked increase in the desire to understand better address the global issue.

Global warming refers to the gradual rise in the world's temperature because of the increase in the level of the atmosphere's carbon dioxide, which traps heat.

During the last few ago, the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was only about 280 parts per million. Today it has risen to 377 ppm.

Next generation

It is projected to go up even further to 600 ppm by 2100 if the current rates of economic growth are left unchecked, according to the briefing paper prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the WEF.

As leaders come to grips with the adverse effects of climate change, they have also expressed optimism that the next generation would live in a more prosperous world.

The survey indicated that the majority of leaders participating in the Davos annual meeting have believe that the new generation would live in a more economically prosperous world, with two-thirds (66 percent) thinking it will be a little or a lot more prosperous.

The same respondents, however, were pessimistic about security, with three out of five believing that the next generation would be living in a little or less safe world.

Zobel acknowledged that there were divisions in the world contributing to the view of a less safe world for the next generation, but said he personally wanted to hold on the sense of optimism.

"For me, what is important is that higher sense of optimism on a global perspective," he said.

in Davos:
re trade

Ms Arroyo is scheduled to attend a breakfast hosted by Credit Suisse, after which she will have a 30-minute discussion with William Rhodes, chair, president and CEO of Citibank NA and executive committee chair of Citigroup.

Then it's off to meet with Klaus Schwab, the founder of the WEF.

Later in the day, she will take part in the discussion on Asia at the Congress Center.

Ms Arroyo will end the day with dinner with acknowledgment hosted by Hoja chief Minister Abbott at the Hotel Belvedere.

On Saturday, Ms Arroyo is scheduled to meet with Prakash P Hinduja, chair of Hinduja Group (Europe) and AMMS Bank (Switzerland) SA and Brahmdeo Parkinson, chair and CEO of Teletech, which has a number of call centers in the Philippines.

Prince Andrew, too

It has also been confirmed that Prince Andrew, The Duke of York, will meet with the troops just before lunch at the Acadella Mansion hotel Phildelphia.

Ms Arroyo will end her trip at the WEF with the customs with Craig R. Barrett, chair of Intel Corp., and representatives from the Spanish firm Union Fenosa, which has a stake in Manila Electric Co.

In a statement before the left Manila, Ms Arroyo said she was going to the WEF "to represent the Philippines and Asia in our continuing quest for peace, goodwill, security and shared prosperity."

"The Philippines lies in the nexus of one of the fastest growing regional economies, is a vibrant hub for global workers, and plays a strategic role in world trade and global security," she said.

Ms Arroyo said the Philippines would continue to seek ways to provide the people with the best that the private and public sectors of several governments, international organizations and the accelerated cooperation that enlarges the space for peace and prosperity on a rapidly changing field."

tarted forum ...

nurses of the event and allows attendees to focus more on the issues at hand.

At last year's meeting, among the issues discussed were the impact of space on society and the launching of The Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis. Some 20 trade leaders also agreed at the meeting to move to increase trade, services, and manufacturing and to accelerate talks for a world trade deal.

Under the theme "The Shifting Power Equation," this year's meeting will be attended by more than 2,400 people, some 800 of whom are chief executives and chairs—the highest number of business leaders since the meeting was launched. Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Invisible people

EDITORIAL

THE INQUIRER SERIES ON AUTISM IS AN EYE-opener on a largely invisible sector in Philippine society. Perhaps because they have been treated with benign neglect by a society that cannot comprehend the complex dimensions of autism, these "special people" have generally been shunted aside in a world easy to be "normalcy" and which chooses to ignore any behavior that goes against the grain or is, in social psychologist would say, "deviant" or "deviance."

Autism turns its sufferers into outcasts. The condition has really different manifestations so that scientists and psychologists have come up with the phrase "autism spectrum disorders" (ASDs) to denote behaviors characterized by impairment in communication skills and social interactions, and restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior.

Civilizations have invariably responded to people afflicted with the disorders with a mixture of superstition and repulsion. It is safe to say that many of those committed to the asylum in the last centuries were not madmen but people afflicted with autism. In former days in the Philippines, people with autism were consigned to the family basement, forced to live their days in near darkness as a family's worst-kept secret.

But people with ASDs now have come to light.

The fact that the media have slowly but steadily increased their spotlight on the phenomenon should indicate that Philippine society is ceasing to gripe with autism. It cannot be otherwise because autism is a reality no one can ignore. The United States Department of Health and Human Services estimates that out of 1,000 children, two to six suffer from "pervasive developmental disorders," the other name for ASD. It is said that some 250,000 to 300,000 Filipinos have developmental disorders.

Although the disorders might have afflicted humanity since the dawn of time, it is only in the last century that medical scientists came up with a name for the disorder that causes family disruptions and even wasted lives. In 1943, the American doctor Leon Kanner introduced the phrase "early infantile autism" to explain the strange behavior of 11 children he had studied. At around the same time in Europe, Dr. Hans Asperger discovered a similar, though milder, disorder which came to be known as *Asperger syndrome*. Today these two disorders are listed in the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders." If a child has symptoms of either disorders, but does not meet specific criteria for either, the diagnosis is called pervasive development disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS).

ASD is more common among the pediatric population. Parents and adults can easily spot possible indicators of ASD in a child: he does not babble, point, or mimic meaningful gestures by the first year; does not speak a word by 16 months; does not combine two words by two years; does not respond to names; and does not have language or social skills. Other indicators are poor eye contact, inability to play with toys, excessive tendency to line up toys or objects, inexplicable attachment to a toy or object, seeming inability to smile, and apparent hearing impairment.

Because they have trouble communicating, children with ASDs or PDDs may resort to tantrums to get what they want. Some may hurt themselves in frustration. Even if they hurt themselves, some may not cry because of reduced sensitivity to pain. Others, however, have an abnormal sensitivity to stimulation and may flinch at the slightest pain or even at parental caress.

Despite their condition, children with ASDs can develop into productive members of society as long as their affliction can be detected early and intervention are applied on time. Recent studies have shown that diagnosis of children at 2 years old and even less can still bring about changes. A child who was found to be "non-verbal" when he was 3 years old, can now, at age 13, talk and has been integrated in a regular class. He still has difficulty adjusting to social situations but the adjustments gains have been lessened because he can communicate.

It is because there's an urgency to raise awareness about ASDs and the need for early diagnosis and intervention that for the past 11 years the nation has been marking Autism Consciousness Week every Jan. 14 to 21. There has grown a national consciousness on autism, and initiatives and interventions have been made to respond better to the needs of people with ASDs. But much more must be done.

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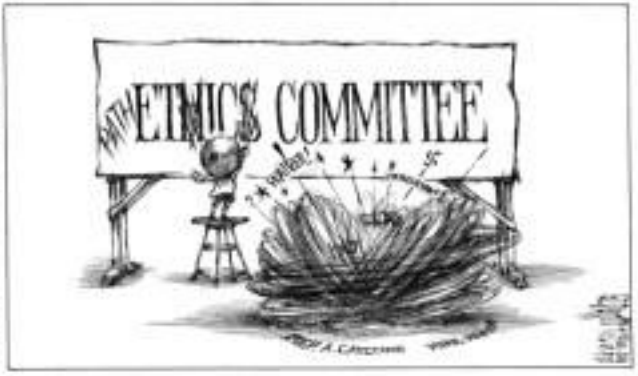

The controversy over the sale of PLDT shares

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE SALE THROUGH PUBLIC BIDDING OF 111.643 unpublished shares of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) has spawned another controversy. These shares, which have grown a hundred times due to subsequent stock dividends over the years, was declared by the Supreme Court in January 2006 as part of the "ill-gotten wealth" of the Marcoses. The Court ordered their forfeiture to the government. Here is a background on these shares:

Under pressure to sell its controlling interest due to the 1969 expiration of the Lacson-Long Tay Agreement, the American-owned GTE sold its 20 percent share of PLDT's equity to the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC). The shares in question represent 46 percent of those PLDT shares, acquired by the group of Filipino businessmen led by the late Ricardo Cojuangco. PTIC states in the bidding form for the PLDT shares of the Cojuangco group.

In 1977, the US Securities and Exchange Commission declared that then President Ferdinand Marcos had used several corporate fronts to hide his financial stake in the ownership of PLDT shares. The first front was PTIC, the second was Prime Holdings, a firm which was formed in 1977 by Rolando Gapud and Jose Campos Jr. Prime Holdings later became a major stockholder of PTIC, controlling 46 percent of PTIC.

In 1986, after the ouster of Marcos, the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) sequestered the equity of Prime Holdings. But the Presidential Commission on Good Government spared the shareholdings of the Cojuangco family. All nine Tuchingcos and Antonio Moya.

In 1998, the Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co., an investment firm owned by the Salim family of Indonesia, acquired the 34 percent equity characterizing the way for the latter's control of PLDT.

On the other hand, the Prime Holdings shares underwent several litigations. At least four groups emerged to claim title to the Philippine government. The Financiers led by Eusebio Tanco claimed ownership of the entire PLDT controlling interest, saying that the Cojuangco group was a mere front for Marcos's, the Cojuangcos, and the Pathfinders.

In 2002, the Sandiganbayan ruled that the Prime Holdings shares belonged to the Cojuangcos. But in January 2006, the Supreme Court reversed the Sandiganbayan decision, ruling that they formed part of the Marcos "ill-gotten wealth." In late October, the Court declared all motions for reconsideration filed by the three claimant groups and ruled with finality that they were finished without title of the government.

The PCGG then told the PTIC shares through public bidding. The bidding was won by Singapore investment firm Farallon Capital Management. The other and current stockholder have the right of first refusal. Therefore First Pacific and NTT DoCoMo of Japan, a minority stockholder, could buy those shares if they matched Farallon's winning bid. They announced that they intended to do just that.

There were five points of controversy:

1. One side says the bidding was rigged to favor certain bidders; the public bidding was not announced.

The other side says the bidding was announced on May 13, 2006 to invite bidders to bid publicly on June 30. Newspaper ads appeared on May 13 and 24, the invitation to bid was published in a total of 13 issues in seven different newspapers. Aside from the ads, the planned sale of the PTIC shares was reported repeatedly and extensively in the local media.

2. One side says the three price was so low and took two bidders participated. The government stands to lose between $50 billion and $17 billion.

The other side says the Department of Finance believed that the shares were worth reasonable if they were sold as one block, rather than several blocks. With the estimated price at around P20 billion, very few parties, both local and foreign, have the funds to bid such a huge amount.

The three price was set by taking the average trading price of PLDT shares during the 10 transient trading days of PLDT shares between Nov. 15 and Dec. 4, multiplying this by the number of PLDT shares to which the 111,415 shares in PTIC corresponded, and discounting this by 15 percent.

3. One side says that sensibly at block sale of a major blue chip carries a premium ranging from 20 percent to 50 percent over its prevailing market price. But the PTIC shares were sold at par.

The other side says the PTIC shares are not the same as PLDT shares. PTIC shares are not easily tradable, can only be sold subject to a right to match which can take over 60 days to execute and do not come with direct voting rights in PLDT. Thus, PTIC shares are highly-risk, less liquid and less desirable investments than PLDT shares. It is therefore to be expected that they would trade at a discount.

4. One side says the 1967 Constitution limits foreign ownership in a telecommunications company to 40 percent of total equity. First Pacific now holds almost 25 percent, while NTT DoCoMo has 21 percent. If the sale of shares was consummated, foreign ownership could reach over 40 percent.

The other side says First Pacific and NTT Do-Como have no present intention to buy the shares of Salim Pacific. The Business Department is not aware that the foreign group owns Pacific. But even if it were true, and had the 1967 known, there is no restriction against the participation of any financially capable entity whether related to the First Pacific group or not.

NCAE: For when dreams exceed one's grasp

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

LAST WEEK, 13 MILLION HIGH SCHOOL seniors nationwide took the National Career Assessment Examination to find the match between their skills and current paths, in a job market that sees scarcity amidst what is a glut. Here is where we value the diploma and need the learning. Nonetheless, the Department of Education has done well to include this exam, for there are hurdles to overcome along the way.

First, the parents. They are the silent ones although in every stage of schooling, except at the moment when the kids choose their courses. Then the hidden ambitions, the fallen dreams and the post-up anxieties all surface. I recall the scene from "The Godfather 3," where Don Michael Corleone wanted his eldest son to be a lawyer, but the boy wanted to sing, well, do "Tha-ta-tha-tha Godfather." But Michael told him: Go to law school, become a lawyer, and then if you still want to sing, go ahead, but if your singing career doesn't work, then you have a profession to fall back on.

To borrow the words of Bruce Joha, how many "sons of lawyers, sons of bankers" (and homebuyers, sons and daughters of doctors) will be forced into careers chosen by their parents? How can the NCAE avoid the mismatch between talent and ambition, when talent is merely God-given while ambition is parent-driven? Guess who prevails.

Second, classmates and acquaintances. There was a huge increase in law school enrollments in the United States when the 1980s TV series "LA Law" first hit the screens. I haven't kept abreast of all the law- or medicine-related shows, but I remember seeing kids being driven by idealized but barely non-existent images. Often, they are the creative and then enterprising, but not the sheer drudgery of day-to-day life, as, say, a law student or medical student.

For medical schools, there are in fact two exams where applicants who finished the National Medical Admission Test even all the way to the Supreme Court to assert their right to dream of becoming doctors. (They lose.) But for most aspirants, it comes to the Philippine government. The government stands to lose between $50 billion and $17 billion.

The other side says the Department of Finance believed that the shares were worth reasonable if they were sold as one block, rather than several blocks. With the estimated price at around P20 billion, very few parties, both local and foreign, have the funds to bid such a huge amount.

The three price was set by taking the average trading price of PLDT shares during the 10 transient trading days of PLDT shares between Nov. 15 and Dec. 4, multiplying this by the number of PLDT shares to which the 111,415 shares in PTIC corresponded, and discounting this by 15 percent.

3. One side says that sensibly at block sale of a major blue chip carries a premium ranging from 20 percent to 50 percent over its prevailing market price. But the PTIC shares were sold at par.

The other side says the PTIC shares are not the same as PLDT shares. PTIC shares are not easily tradable, can only be sold subject to a right to match which can take over 60 days to execute and do not come with direct voting rights in PLDT. Thus, PTIC shares are highly-risk, less liquid and less desirable investments than PLDT shares. It is therefore to be expected that they would trade at a discount.

4. One side says the 1967 Constitution limits foreign ownership in a telecommunications company to 40 percent of total equity. First Pacific now holds almost 25 percent, while NTT DoCoMo has 21 percent. If the sale of shares was consummated, foreign ownership could reach over 40 percent.

The other side says First Pacific and NTT Do-Como have no present intention to buy the shares of Salim Pacific. The Business Department is not aware that the foreign group owns Pacific. But even if it were true, and had the 1967 known, there is no restriction against the participation of any financially capable entity whether related to the First Pacific group or not.

Comments to pascalpangalangan@gmail.com

Third Force: rumblings of a shake-up

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

A THIRD FORCE MOVEMENT HAS EMERGED, with a strong undercurrent challenging attempts to polarize the May mid-term election into a case of confidence for President Macapagal-Arroyo or for former President Joseph Estrada, whose ally deposed in 2001.

The movement is a revolt against the tit-for-tat back of a untold issue—the legality of the incorrect takeover of the presidency of Joseph Ponce Enrile—is the electoral arena in the dominant issue in the May 2007 elections.

Third force movements are not a novelty in Philippine post-war elections. They gained notoriety in the 1957 presidential election contested by Carlos P. Garcia of the Nacionalista Party and his vice-president Jose Yulo of the Liberal Party, and won from the third force movement, led by Manuel Manahan and the Progressive Party of the Philippines and Jesus Cisneros, leader of the Nationalist Citizens Party. Benefiting from the four-way split of the vote, Garcia won, but the results paved the way for subsequent third force movements.

Here's a quick look at it in exploration of present against attempts to unveil the May election into a polar fight between the forces and friends. The polarization then as a number of forces facing the incumbent administration, especially the administration's legitimacy, including her strong arm method of rule, her trampling of political rights, her policies and priorities involving constitutional change and the economic insurgency, those of power and the

presidency stigma of unresolved corruption issues, the unsolved murders of political activists and the notorious fraudulent ages.

The movement third force is promoting the rising and increasing of the issues of the May elections by the administration and groups desiring to represent the opposition in the formation of their tickets for the Senate election. Two alignments are shaping up, one formed by the administration Lakas coalition, and the other by the so-called "opposition" groups. (SAMCIS, in which the force is trying arbitrarily to call the shots on who should be on the UNI lineup.

Those two camps are unequivocal parties on each. They represent two basic and diverse political parties and individuals underlined by contrasting political and social programs. One identifies the election issue, according to whether their candidates are pro- or anti-administration, leaning more on the fault or other basis for success in the polls.

Somewhere between these two basic coalitions is a floating but politically consequential body which does not want or be caught in the trap of these two contenders and yet is being courted by both. One such group that symbolizes the center-third force movement is made up of incumbent senators and ex-senators, whose inclusion in the contending tickets can increase in the opposition hands of the coalition's candidates. They are considered by the Palace as "traitors" to the administration, leaning more to

Parallel importation of drugs poses danger to public health

LETTERS

I WISH TO JOIN THE PUBLIC HEARING on the proposed bill (Senate Bill No. 2265) which seeks to allow the parallel importation of drugs, particularly from India. (PDI, 1/22/07) It is assumed that allowing parallel importation is a win-win deal, at the same time, will reduce drug prices in the country.

The truth, however, is that both assumptions have not been proven true. Worse, the bill, if passed into law, might just prove the opposite. I am afraid that the bill might just result in the very people it aims to protect to more risks. The Filipino people deserve to be informed of those risks.

Sweet and simple slogans should not be used to cover up the risks inherent in the proposed. Legalizing the parallel importation of medicines in just any person could be potentially hazardous to public health. In a country with inadequate resources and regulatory controls, parallel importation could open up more opportunities for the insertion of counterfeit products into a complicated distribution chain, involving several wholesalers and brokers—like what the Philippines has. It is often virtually impossible to tell with the naked eye the difference between real and fake medicines.

In sum, the proposed bill may surrender what is paramount—protection of public health—for what is peripheral. It sacrifices safety for affordability.

—DR. ALEXANDER C. CARDENCIO, MD, DABIC, Bamendden, Cebu

Study on cell sites inconclusive

TWO REFERS TO THE LETTER OF Irene M. Dado, regarding cell sites. (PDI, 1/5/07) For RPE (radio frequency radiation) facilities, such as cell sites (also called mobile phone base stations), the Bureau of Health Devices and Technology (BHDT) of the Department of Health does a desktop evaluation using technical data on the facility submitted by the applicant/company. An RPE safety evaluation report is then issued. The company submits this report to the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and to the local government.

An RPE evaluation has been done on the cell site in Dado's subdivision and reported. Our report shows that the minimum safe distance is 0.48 m (four of a microwave antenna, and 2.40 meters in front of a cellular antenna. Since these antennas are installed on the edges of roll towers, a person will be exposed to RPE at harmful levels only if he/she climbs a ladder at 140 m for tower and stays directly in front of the antennas at **less than the distances indicated** above and at the same level as the **antennas**. The RPE safety evaluation report to valid unless modifications have been made that can affect the power density levels in the facility.

On the health effects of cell sites or towers:

1. A cell site does not emit X-rays, alpha rays, beta rays, or gamma rays. X-rays are produced by an X-ray machine with alpha, beta and gamma rays are emitted by radioactive materials.

2. A cell site uses antennas which emit RPE and microwave radiation. The proven effects of RPE and microwaves are thermal or heating effects which could lead to cataracts, skin burns, deep burns, heat radiation and heat stroke. However, these effects will not occur if a person keeps a safe distance in front of the antennas.

3. The BEIT study done in 2000 entitled "Interactions of Radiofrequency Radiation Levels Around Selected Cellular Base Stations in the National Capital Region" states that RPE levels around cellular base stations are below RPE standards set by the DOH, based on the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection's exposure restrictions (reference books).

4. The **latest World Health Organization** Fact Sheet No. 304 dated May 2006, titled "Electromagnetic Fields and Public Health: Base Stations and Wireless Technologies," states that "Exposures to levels considered safe, so adverse short- or long-term health effects have been shown to occur from the RF signals produced by base stations."

—AGNETES PERALTA, M. Sc., director 4, Council, Bureau of Health Devices and Technology, San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Avenue, Sta. Cruz, Manila, www.doh.gov.ph

Still hoping to be 'Valiant'

THAT WAS A GREAT PIECE ABOUT Daisy dwellers in the Am. (2) issue of the Inquirer. May I add my own personal recollection?

In 1942, when Daisy Hontiveros and Lualhati Antillana were relatively, the College of the Holy Spirit or CHS (Here Holy Ghost College) was designated by the archbishop to produce and direct the "Mission Play" for that year. CHS asked Lualhati to handle the project.

He asked Daisy to write the play, and Daisy wrote "And Our Sea Valiant." This was about a Tinggian princess who was contested by Christianity, but when the tribe heard about it, the tribal princess was asked to renounce her non-religion. She wouldn't, so they wound her to death.

The auditions people were mostly of the high school classes at CHS to pick the girl who would play it out, and I guess I was Tinggian enough to be chosen to play that role.

For two nights at the theater in Padre Faura auditorium, I was "wound" to death, rolling up lying on the floor with a lot of crying.

Nobody, perhaps not even Daisy remembers it now, but for one Christian I have enlisted that role, hoping again and again that I may truly become "And Our Sea Valiant."

—EUGENIA ADRIAN APOSTOL, M.D. '48, editor and Inquirer founder

Customs 'alligators' at airport

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE ARTICLE, "Filipino deployment abroad exceeds 3M, surges—labor dept." This means more unwinding dollar remittances, right? And more dollar remittances means a stronger economy for our country.

But when we come home for a short visit, what do the Bureau of Customs officials do to us at the airport? They pretend to inspect our luggage and try to hone us of the remaining money we're spending, wanting for a duty. Once, they took three bags of chocolates from my luggage against my will.

And when it's time to go back to our host countries, we can't be exempted from paying inward tax unless we show proof of payment of Philhealth and OWWA dues.

Is it not worse than robbers we see the customs officials doing? Customs officials, the government we are helping ensure be more sensitive?—Indra Bracken, Thailand (via e-mail)

* * *

My brother was also a victim of these "alligator" customs officials at the airport last Jan. 27. He had an OWWA ID, but the "alligator" people kept asking for the receipt for the ID card.

Wasn't that nonsense? It turned out that the "alligators" only needed a "pasalubong." We had no time for discussion and arguing, so my brother gave them the money. I think part of the money went to their boss.

People like these should be fired. If this self-confident, many overseas Filipino workers and their families will lose trust in our country.—**Arbie Bliss, Evadia, Manila** (via e-mail)

* * *

As usual, the opposition is not offering any real alternatives to this year's elections; for example, the senators are fielding their immediate relatives to run for the Senate slots they so desire, the females, especially! And, to my disappointment, the Commission and the Peninsula, esp. I thought they still had other more have line officials.

Perhaps they are doing it for love of country, but for practical purposes, wouldn't it be better for our gridlock-prone Congress that, since Daisy or Binay or Bayo or Abo is already in the Senate, that "none" or "neither" would take in the house to execute a few executive relationship between the vice chambers of Congress?

I wish our young politicians would have and sound backbone and not run motivated by the votes of their "mga" elders.—**Basil Trinidad, Roxas** (via e-mail)

* * *

Are there no people more qualified other than senators, governors and incarcerated criminals to run the government? I think people who are in jail should be banned from running for public office. It is time to change our Constitution regarding qualifications of individuals to public office.—**Dennis andel Arca, New Jersey** (via e-mail)

* * *

It is time for the so-called "mga" to understand the real issue or mind of the Estrados, the Cayetanos, the Honteveds and the many "mga" and political dynasties that continue to mangle on the national welfare such that prevented sense of self-righteousness. What a disgrace, indeed, if we have three Estradas, two Cayetanos and father and son Pimentels in the Senate!

He should all say NO! NO! NO! NO to "[illegible]."—**Elmer Catubig, Naga City** (via e-mail)

* * *

As an American, I am ashamed of the action the United States government took regarding rapist Daniel Smith repatriated to US custody. I personally think he should die in his cell in the Philippine correctional system by injecting the young girl.

It is a disgrace to our men and women in uniform to have a rapist among them.—**Oliver Pugh, 1816 Glen St., Bessemer, Alabama, USA** (via e-mail)

* * *

Shame on the judge who presided over the Subic rape case and shame on "Nicole" [Dalisi Jaque magsalin sa letrato nasi Gabriela]!

It is so obvious that "Nicole" willingly went for shopping and willingly went with Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith. Her registered lawyer was with him and cried rape because the soldier thought she was a prostitute.

Probably a decent Filipina go to a pickup place where foreigners abound? The alien [illegible] actually thinks Nicole is innocent.—**Jennifer Dimayuga, Malate, Manila** (via e-mail)

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Across the NATION

DOJ drops raps vs Chinese poachers

PUERTO PRINCESA City—Local authorities yesterday said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez ordered the provincial prosecutor's office on Monday (Jan. 22) to drop the cases of poaching and use of explosives and toxic substances against the 24 Chinese poachers caught in October last year.

The fishermen, whose boat yielded dynamited fish and live reef fish, were arrested on Oct. 24 off Elangaren Island in Bataraza, 273 kilometers south of here.

Authorities disclosed that Gonzalez ordered Prosecutor Allen Rose Rodriguez to withdraw the 59 kgs of the ban cases.

Rodriguez said that as a way of "adhering with the secretary's directive," he filed a motion to "withdraw criminal information" at the Regional Trial Court Branch 52 under Judge Teshia Bun.

The judge released 20 Chinese poachers caught in the Tubbataha Reef in December.

The motion to drop the charges will be heard on Feb. 2. Arraignment for the poaching case was set for Jan. 26 but the Chinese moved for its postponement pending their appealed to the DOJ.

With the DOJ resolution, the prosecutors expressed concern that the Chinese, their boat and fishing paraphernalia would be released anytime.

"I have yet to receive the resolution, but I have already alerted the legal department which is preparing a legal pleading," said Paciano Ganas, chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Palawan.

Lawyer Cristalida Mayo-Anda of the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (Elac) expressed readiness to extend legal assistance to the BFAR.

"We are strengthening or seeking a temporary restraining order to stop the release of the vessel and its crew," said Mayo-Anda.

Earlier reports identified the apprehended vessel as Kwok Tai May which was registered in Hong Kong.

Some of the poachers are out on bail while the rest are in the provincial jail.

Three cases have been filed by the BFAR-Palawan and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) for violations of the Fisheries Code—Section 97, poaching; Section 88, use of explosives and noxious substances; and Section 97, collection of endangered species.

The Chinese filed a motion for reconsideration but this was denied. They again filed a motion for reconsideration and were denied anew by the prosecutors.

The Chinese's lawyer tried all legal remedies to delay the proceeding before filing the appeal to Gonzalez who decided to dismiss the cases according to Mayo-Anda.

The captain, Kwok Wai Ming, earlier accused the BFAR-Palawan, the boat custodian, of theft of fishing paraphernalia.

BFAR officials denied the accusation, saying it was a strategy to divert attention away from the issue.

Local authorities and NGOs expressed apprehension that this illegal plea would be used by the 30 Chinese caught intruding in the Tubbataha Reef on Dec. 23.

The 30 Chinese poachers posted another P1.7 million bond for killing endangered species and impairing rich species without permits.

Earlier, the Sulu Fisherfolk group Pembunsing Lahat ng Ehong Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pumalakap) made public a letter of Chinese Ambassador Li Jinjun pressing foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap to intervene for the release of the Chinese poachers.

Atty. Pio Catamco, chair of the environment committee, sought tougher laws against illegal fishing in Tubbataha. Robert Magallen and Nelly Mabilan Lit, Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE EXPANSION of fish cages is one manifestation of the growing demand for fish and other marine resources that has driven fishermen to venture beyond municipal waters only to face stiff competition from foreign fishing vessels.

Farmers storm DAR meeting at Davao hotel

DAVAO CITY—SOME 500 FARMers from different parts of Mindanao and Negros Occidental stormed a gathering of top officials of the Department of Agrarian Reform in a posh hotel here Wednesday to express disgust over the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

The farmers demanded the immediate installation on lands awarded to them by the DAR through CARP.

The protesters were numberless of the soldiers and security guards at the entry of Waterfront Hotel where DAR officials were having their accomplishments.

Some soldiers fired warning shots. The demonstrators said a certain Sgt. Gonzales Nespine pulled his gun at the protesters.

Tension eased when Nardito Sloto, agrarian reform undersecretary, and other DAR officials were out to talk to the farmers.

The farmers, however, were demanding to see Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman. He didn't seem out to meet them.

"We are faced with legal and technical problems that's why we find the implementation [of CARP] difficult," said Sloto. "I understand the impatience of the farmers."

Leni Pacion, Task Force Mapalad spokesperson, said DAR was completely inside, failing to install farmers on awarded land and distribute new land covered by CARP.

"What kind of accomplishments can they boast of?" said Pacion.

Pacion, in 2003, Davao Oriental, said a 2949-hectare property there was covered by the CARP but the landowner filed a case that was still pending at the DAR-Southern Mindanao.

Concerned Subic, who spoke on behalf of farmers from Bukidnon, also said the DAR dags on their demand for the pieces of property of the Gaingones, Salcos and Sebastian clans in Maladybay.

The 23.9-ha. Lala Gaingones farm, owned by the brother of former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Jar Boot, under the program since 1990. The process is not moving because of the Gaingones' petition for exemption.

"If the DAR continues to be indecisive and weak over these matters, the situation could lead to unrest," Salco said.

Pacion from La Castellana, Negros Occidental, also asked Pangandaman to fulfill a promise to install them on a 144-ha. piece of property that was awarded them through the CARP. The land is owned by Roberto Cuenca. Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

Farmer slain, 4 hurt in land reform clash

BACOLOD CITY—A farmer was killed yesterday and four others were injured Wednesday as ten flat unidentified farmers in a land reform area in La Carlota City, Negros Occidental, 67 kilometers south of here.

Pepito Santillan, 50, was killed when armed men shot at farmers' homes at 2 a.m. Thursday in Hacienda Nieto Malaga, according to Lid Sector of the Task Force Mapalad (TFM), an organization of militant farmers.

On Wednesday, four persons were wounded in a gun battle inside the disputed hacienda between rival farmers groups, the TFM said.

The slain farmer and two of the wounded were members of the TFM. The two other wounded were the head of the security force and a farmer identified with landowner Roberto Cuenca.

For more than a decade, Cuenca has been resisting the inclusion of his family's 650-ha. sugar estate in the land reform program.

The wounded were identified as Enrique Medilo, chief security officer of the hacienda; farm worker Renato Matas; and TFM members Bernardo Santillo, 41, and Boy Cerviño, 39.

The Department of Agrarian Reform has awarded to farmers 144 ha of the property in 2002, a decision upheld by the Supreme Court in September 2004. The farmers, however, were unable to occupy the land.

Santillan, however, were unable to occupy the land.

TFM spokesperson Edna Jo-lumbay blamed Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman for what she called his indecisiveness and failure to fulfill his promise to install the land reform beneficiaries who already hold Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs).

Senior Insp. Placido Gongora, La Carolina police chief, yesterday said the rival groups accused each other of starting the gun battle.

Medilo and Matas, who are under police guard at the hospital, were being treated for bullet wounds at the Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital in Bacolod. Cerviño was hit in the left hand while Santillo was wounded before the clash.

Gongora said the clash occurred after TFM members occupied a portion of the hacienda awarded to them by the DAR.

Subsequently claimed the disputing started as security guards, backed by a squad of police armed Civilian Volunteer Organization men, tried to break up the ranks of some 100 farmers who tried to occupy a portion of the land already awarded to them in 2002.

Those involved in the battle have gone into hiding after policemen and soldiers of the 15th Infantry Battalion arrived, he said.

Troopers of the 603rd Brigade Group have been tasked by Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, Philippine Army commander, to investigate the incidents. Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

THE DEMAND for land continues as the government grapples with lack of funds, feud between farmers' groups, landowner resistance, and an inefficient bureaucracy in implementing a land reform program that in critics said was doomed to fail from the start. ~

Remote Samar town mayor murdered

By Vicente S. Lalata
Inquirer Visayas

CALBAYOG CITY—THE MUNICIpal mayor of the inland town of Paranas, Samar was fatally shot early Thursday while he was attending a village dance.

Police, however, could not say if the killing of Paranas Mayor Benito G. Arriesgo was election-related or due to a personal grudge as the investigation was still going on.

Arriesgo, 47, a member of the Liberal Party (LP), was brought to this city but was declared dead on arrival at a hospital, according to a report that Chief Supt. Eliseo dela Paz, police director for Eastern Visayas, submitted to PNP Chief Director Gen. Calderon yesterday.

Samar Gov. Exod Uneta, who heads the LP in the province, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

The killing occurred at around 2 a.m. on Jan. 25 in Barangay 10-Poblacion, an area of Paranas town, while the mayor was in a booth/dance as part of a fiesta celebration.

Arriesgo suffered five bullet wounds in the body. The gunmen missed only the crowd and disappeared.

Police said a .45 cal. pistol was used.

Senior Supt. Asadul Alsah, Samar police chief, went to Paranas yesterday in supervise the investigation, according to Dela Paz.

Arriesgo, a civil engineer by profession, left behind his wife Lucia and four children, the eldest of whom is in fourth year high school while the youngest is in Grade 4.

Arriesgo is on his second term as mayor. His wife was mayor in 1998.

His brother, Ebenezer Jr., was mayor during the Marcos dictatorship.

In 1986, his younger brother, Ebenezer Jr., then the town police chief, was gunned down in a village fiesta. The case has remained unsolved.

The slain mayor's wife refused to talk to reporters. A sister and some relatives, however, said they had no idea why anyone would want him killed.

Elena A. Quintito, an elder sister of the victim who now lives in the capital town of Catbalogan, said her brother received hard to have electric lights and a potable water system installed in the remote town.

THE KILLINGS won't stop and mistrust would prevent rallies condemning them. Protesters gather at the gates of the Philippine National Police in Camp Aguinaldo.

US official mobbed by Muslim kids in Sulu

Newspaper A1

Bush is expected to make a phone call to President Macapagal-Arroyo to personally thank her for her administration's efforts in building bridges of love in the Philippines, thus keeping America safe from terrorists as well.

"It only underlines the station and contribution of the Filipinos to the American way of life," Bush was expected to make after Mr. Romero arrived in Davos, Switzerland, for a three-day visit. (See story overleaf, page 1)

Hughes, who arrived in the Philippines on Wednesday morning and was due to leave for Indonesia after the Davos meeting, spent Wednesday night in Malacañang and negotiated her on the "very successful" counter-terrorism campaign that resulted in the killing of Jordanian terrorist Al-Ghozi and the capture of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadafy Janjalani.

BUSH CONFIDANTE IN MALACAÑANG. Karen Hughes, undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, and a longtime aide to US President George W. Bush, pays a courtesy call on President Arroyo on Wednesday evening. With Hughes is US Ambassador Kristie Kenney. PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO

Hughes flew yesterday to Jolo, Sulu, with US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, who apparently wanted to "showcase" the US government's development efforts there, the military said.

He said he would not be surprised if Hughes were also to visit Maguindanao, where the US government is also engaged in development projects.

The official party in Baghdad itinerary said sending Washington VIPs to Mindanao must be the Bush administration's way of trying to use up those what could have been a few Only "veterans" in the Philippines' predominantly Muslim South.

According to the official, "a team of US officials" has been making high-profile visits to Mindanao since last year.

Among the American VIPs who visited the region last year were Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kelly Aubin, Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman and Admiral Mullen, and Robert Hoe, Daniel Boone.

"We are now engaged in combat operations," Aguirre Senior Fellow Gabriel Hughes in talking experience in Mindanao, Sulu.

She said the Philippine and US governments were "cooperating together to try to weed out the Abu Sayyaf terrorist elements and threats to terrorism."

"We want to partner with the people of the Philippines in a way that doesn't help them stay the economic benefits, building peace and stability," she said.

Diplomacy of peace

Hughes described the US involvement in the Philippines as a "diplomacy of peace."

"The things that we are doing are economic ways to help people have better lives," she said after meeting with Mindanao governors and seeing the computer project lifted by the US government.

Some of US military advancement been spending to help elect, but not, when the Arroyo/Estrada-Philippine-

Special guests

After the dinner at Malacañang Palace, several US Embassy officials led by Kenney were the Arroyo's special guests at an awarding ceremony for Filipino military officers and men involved in the anti-terrorism campaign efforts in Mindanao.

Hughes thanked the soldiers for a job well done, saying, "They were the ones in the front lines, enduring (their) lives to help keep all of us safe."

The President and the visiting American officials talked about the recent military successes against the Abu Sayyaf as well as the "salvo" of the 105th Battalion was gunner, which, according to Esmeralda, had helped in "reducing the operational capability" of the ASG.

Arroyo also thanked Mrs. Hughes that at President and concurrent defense secretary, she had released P10 billion to counter the implementation of the AFP modernization program.

He said this was "a cause-cut" for the Americans to "deliver fast enough" Philippine acquisitions such as helicopters and communications equipment.

Slain Abu Sayyaf leader lived among flowers in 'paradise'

Newspaper A1

of the 6th Special Forces Company that killed Sulaimon, was amazed at Sulaimon's dwellings on Mount Inje in Talipao, Sulu.

Mijares, 38, said his men found 17 bunkers believed to be used by the Abu Sayyaf leader and some Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah commanders.

Flowers and perfumes

Each has had two beds, chairs and a makeshift bathroom for the leaders and soldiers that were stocked with bottles of perfume.

Some 200 marines among the troops found 27 smaller bunkers believed to be used by the Abu Sayyaf fighters.

The encampment had a cellular phone station, which is rare on Jolo Island, and natural water sources.

"There were flowers leading to the bunkers and around the bunkers. It was like paradise," Mijares said.

Lt. Col. Antonio Bobis, head of the 3rd Special Forces Battalion, said first based on the growth of flowering plants the camp was probably set up more than months ago.

"It was a well-developed camp," said Bobis, citing the bunkers and the water sources.

Mijares said the troops were receiving intelligence information that Sulaimon was the mastermind behind the 10 most-Sept. 14 bombings in Zamboanga City.

VIP bunkers

The soldiers moved closer to the night to get to the foot of Mount Inje.

At the break of dawn on Dec. 16, the soldiers neared the area and made sure to stop past the Abu Sayyaf camp's "forward security" inside up of the 27 bunkers. It appears themselves behind the 17 main "VIP" bunkers.

"They took the longer and harder route to get there," said Special Forces Regiment commander Brig. Gen. Arturo Ortiz. "You would think no one lives in that mountain," he added.

Mijares said he and his men heard sounds from the area, including women's voices. Bombs reported seeing people moving about as well as clothes, including camouflage jackets, hung around.

Sulaimon was killed as he got close to one of the soldiers in hiding, said Cpl. Raul Sumillo, the lead scout.

Sumillo said he was four to six meters away from Sulaimon, who was wearing a t-shirt, pajamas and combat boots, when the three Abu Sayyaf leader went to retrieve firearms in the bunker.

The boy and their repetitive

GOOD JOB, SARGE. Mijares says a scout during recording shots at his congratulates Cpl. Raul Sumillo of the Army Special Forces, who is credited for killing Sulaimon. He was promoted 2 ranks in staff sergeant. PHOTO

provided the soldiers good cover, and Sulaimon realized too late that Sumillo's M-16s rifle was aimed at him.

The leader at each other. I told him, "Come with me, be quiet

phillin, having to recognize." "Instead of stepping forward, Sulaimon screamed and shouted 'Allahu akbar (God is Great),' recalled Sumillo, who did not recognize Sulaimon at the time.

He said Sulaimon yelled to warn his two aides who stood some 25 meters away.

Sumillo, 32, opened fire and hit Sulaimon in the shoulder from the back. Sulaimon tumbled into a ravine, and Mijares rejoined his marine open fire.

The gun battle lasted from 9:20 a.m. to 12:35 p.m., according to Mijares.

But when the soldiers had finally overran the camp, none of the rebels were left behind except Sulaimon's body that his aides failed to retrieve because they were according to the military. Two soldiers were slightly wounded by M203 grenades thrown.

Mijares said his men took pictures of the body before they buried it in the encounter site, as they were instructed by their superiors.

$5-million reward

Upon their return to their base, the soldiers showed the pictures to intelligence operatives who recognized the "unnamed" Abu Sayyaf leader who carried a $5-million reward on his head.

The soldiers later rang twelve rosaries for the terrorist and sang them back to their base, and soldiers of 6th Infantry Division (Stallion) Brigade assisted on Jan. 17 that they had "neutralized" Sulaimon.

Sumillo showed reporters the Olympus digital camera which his squad was used to take the shots Abu Sayyaf's remains. But he said his men had erased the pictures from the camera's memory card.

ORIX said there were unconfirmed reports that Armando Lumbayao, Sulaimon's deputy, and Radullan, with $20-million reward on his head, and also leaders of commander Al-Haider Pawal were injured in the encounter. (Story at left.)

On Jan. 20, the military also announced that a US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) team was in Jolo to help in the probe. (With reports from Jerome Aning in Pulilan, Sulu, last Dec. 27 by Jacquelyn Sampang)

Sulaimon was killed in a Sept. 4 encounter in Pulilan between 27 troops from the Mission Force Battalion and Pulilan-led by Jaul 11. Ramolo Ulimpangi and about 200 rebels. Six Marines were killed and 16 wounded, while 67 rebels, including Sulaimon, were killed.

Part of the job

Asked if he thought himself as a hero, Sumillo, who has been promoted two ranks to staff sergeant, replied, "That is normal for us. That is how our job is."

Sen. Richard Gordon yesterday described a resolution in the Senate committee on public order

Erap camp hits Ang for hiding plea deal

From page A1

release on the same grounds originally allowed for Baron Geisler.

Inquiring said Ang's plea bargain was not a typical arrangement precluded to the defense of his client Estrada, who along with Ang, Jinggoy Estrada and lawyers Edward Serapio, went on trial at the Sandiganbayan for plunder.

The trial, which is detained in his custody in Camp Crame, had been on trial since he was ousted in 2001. He is facing plunder charges for allegedly amassing some P4 billion in ill-gotten wealth.

Joint trial

"Technically, it's still a joint trial, so by law, I guess, there has been no severance of it," Inquiring said of the deal being potentially applied Estrada in the plunder case. "But we are original accused in the case."

Inquiring also said the possibility (a part of Ang's plea deal) pave on his client's case was in sharp contrast with that of Estrada said his spokesperson.

Inquiring criticized government prosecutors and Ang's lawyers for their moves to get to getting Estrada convicted. Inquiring, one of the dissolved after it was presented to the justices of the Sandiganbayan special division during the pre-trial proceedings against Ang on Wednesday.

"They didn't want to give a copy of the agreement. How would you look at that?" Inquiring said.

Battle for hearts and minds

Inquiring said the case "is not only a battle in the courts, but we want to give the public a chance to see what [was supposed to be] revealed in the crimes alleged."

The defense lawyer filed a motion with the Sandiganbayan seeking that the officials on rebellion as not information against Estrada, saying that the case should be resolved by the court without him, the principal accused, being informed about it.

Inquiring also noted that the joint trial officials had dug find had been resolved.

Inquiring said that he was open to give the defense point more time to file its reply to the prosecution's opposition to the defense's formal offer of evidence in light of "the confusion that may have arisen" because of the plea bargain deal.

Inquiring said that if media reports are true, he need to know whether Ang has filed a motion for a separate trial. If not, he should be notified of all hearings, proceedings, if Estrada's rights may be adversely affected." Inquiring said in his motion to the justices.

It will hurt Erap reputation more than his case, says Palace

By GMA Gamboa and Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG BELIEVES THAT CHARGES by "Erap" Ang's admission of taking kickbacks would hurt deposed President Joseph Estrada's reputation rather than the plunder case against the Sandiganbayan.

"If I were Estrada, there is nothing to fear from Ang's statement because Mr. Estrada's case is finished. I just don't know what will be its effect on the public perception because we can't really say what the people will feel," Presidential Chief Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol told reporters yesterday.

Apostol, one of the House prosecutors during Estrada's impeachment trial, said the Palace did not have a hand in Ang's plea bargain offer.

"We have nothing to do with that (Ang's admission). There was no connivance, it was his own strategy (decision)," he said.

Significant role

In an interview with reporters following President Macapagal-Arroyo's departure for Switzerland, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita declined to say that Malacañang had a hand in Ang's admission.

Ermita said that only the prosecution lawyers had any contact with Ang because they felt that Ang could play a "very significant role" in the plunder case.

"It's the usual court procedure. If you want the prosecution lawyers, you would get people who would help in your case," Ermita (that is what Ang) pointed here," he said.

Ermita refused to comment on whether Ang's admission would hurt Estrada's chances of being acquitted of the plunder charge against him.

Ang's plea bargain was to use admissions made by Estrada to discredit Estrada's credibility to lead the opposition coalition, according to opposition lawmakers.

Diminishing Erap popularity

Rep. Aurelio Edgardo "Sonny" Angara said Ang's admission that he and his former gambling buddy pocketed P130 million in tobacco excise taxes would "diminish" the popularity of Estrada's capacity to unify a formidable opposition.

"President Erap Estrada remains the de facto head of the opposition because of his still immense popularity," said Angara.

He said the administration would want to "demolish" Estrada's role in uniting administration critics to ensure victory in the midterm elections.

"That is due process in what is punishable by death prior to the amendment. Before is indispensable. There no death penalty anymore so we ought to be present or not," he added.

Estrada said he was confident of the evidences that his lawyers had submitted in his defense. "The deal will not affect my client's case," Rodriguez said on Wednesday.

Rodriguez said Ang's latest allegations against Estrada would not matter to the court's reenactment of the cash delivery that he said showed that it was physically impossible for one person can be watching over P1 billion in cash.

Rodriguez also said that Ang had already told a Senate inquiry under oath that the alleged divisions of the misused funds, as alleged by the Estrada camp, or those for Gov. Luis Singson, was a lie.

At the Senate impeachment trial of Estrada in 2000 and at his plunder trial at the Sandiganbayan, Singson had said that it was Ang who had delivered the money to Estrada.

No more trial for Ang

Jeremy Villa-Ignacio, lead prosecutor in the plunder case, said Wednesday that the plea bargain deal was accepted by the Sandiganbayan, would from part of the records of the case.

He said there was no longer a need for Angara take the witness stand to testify on how he delivered P130 million in cash to Estrada's residence on 16th Street at North Greenhills, San Juan.

"Why would we go through another trial for wrong Ang? That's already a "fait accompli" and of the admission of his self-confession," Villa-Ignacio said of the admission of having Angara take the stand against Estrada in the case which the prosecution rested.

Deputy Ang takes the stand and tests on the alleged delivery of the money to Estrada's house, the damaging information may not be used against Estrada as the said statement bearing said Villa-Ignacio and Ang's lawyer, Ruth Castelo.

"The plea agreement is just between the prosecutors and our client Atong Ang. It will not affect the case against President Estrada," Castelo said.

Inquiring said the special prosecutors were saying nary thing while Ang's lawyers were saying another. "This is the reason why we are seeking a ruling on the matter from the court," he said.

Like Superman

In his manifestation before the court, Inquiring sought to clarify if Ang's allegations could be considered as close examination by the court.

"Is this honorable court ready to proceed Ang with questions on the indictment to take their like Superman he carried P130 million all by his tomorrow? Or time to have the proper time," Inquiring said. "Does Estrada's entire money? So court could just take any suspension," Inquiring said.

Concerns for Ang's safety

He expressed concern for Ang's safety following his plea bargain deal with the government prosecutors.

Inquiring said that it was to Estrada's interest that his convicted assistant dies so the day when it would be safe for him to tell the "real story."

"He knew a stake in his safety also what he has done. He must him to live. In the wisdom of a new dog he may tell another story this time, the real one," Inquiring said.

Leviste lawyers protest new probe as 'injustice'

From page A1

a recommendation and not the private complainants, they said.

Leviste's lawyers also questioned the impartiality of the public prosecutors assigned to conduct the review, citing a statement of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez of "evident premeditation" in the incident.

The assigned head, Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, denied this in open court on Thursday and said Gonzalez "is not my concern" as "I have my own head."

The defense lawyers called on Alejandro to step down. He said he would leave the court. They said Velasco had already begun the investigation even before the court order granting the complainant's request for a summary judicial.

They said Velasco has already subpoenaed convicted parties, asking them to appear in a meeting at the justice department on Jan. 31.

No eyewitness

"Neither the Secretary of Justice, the State Prosecutor, nor the Head were interview with the judge's dispositions, nor the private complainant, nor even those opinions regarding the guilt or innocence of the accused, for the court is the sole judge of fact," the lawyers said.

The lawyers also worked at the suggestion that the shooting was premeditated, saying there was no eyewitness to the incident.

Velasco turned to give statements included employees of the Leviste-owned hacienda, the GPS, who found the exact victim of Leviste and he his Alex Intonato before the shooting.

The prosecution established from court applications that the killing was perpetrated by intruders. In the case of his, where the amount of attack could not be proven, accused, therefore, should be given the benefit of the doubt," the lawyers said in their motion.

"Using a preponderance standing under circumstances, the defense described to substitute the private complainant's interpretation of Dr. Intonato's wound at the back of the head as evidence of treason.

"There are other gunshot wounds in the wound with, and to theorize that the gunshot wound at the back was the first shot is not only physically impossible but also highly improbable. This is because it's worse on the tendency of the victim was to fall flat on the ground. Hence, it is impossible for him to sustain the other gunshot wounds in front," the lawyers said. Read the full motion

Iloilo attack 'excessive' but cops to get awards

From page A1

nothing to their ground commander, it was a "judgment call" for which they should be commended.

Testifying yesterday at a hearing inquiry into the Jan. 17 assault, Chief Insp. Rolando Dalida defended his men and said the operation aimed at serving a detained order on Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas had been prompted by intervention as "serious order" at the capitol to serve the order. The assault was not unusual.

But Dalida, the police director of Photo 6 Panay, admitted that the assault team had failed to alert anyone in order any threats.

Under cross, he said he had recommended awards for members of the team.

Washing his hands

Speaking with reporters after the hearing, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chair of the police order committee, said the assault team that indicted policemen from the Regional Mobile Group had used "excessive force."

He also accused Dalida of washing his hands of his men's behavior and consequent "liabilities," and lamented that he was even rewarding them for violent actions. "It's sad to know that those who poisoned their guns or evidence will get awards."

At the same inquiry conducted by the Senate committees on public order and on local government, Lacson said he would have to send this office a copy of the (ombudsman's) dismissal order only on Jan. 24. He was and unreasonable, a provincial board member, and the assault team apparent ready to kill.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Director Eric Distrajeta, and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez were invited to testify yesterday.

Lacson said her office would investigate the manner with which the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Philippine National Police administered the dismissal order on Tupas.

Members of the assault team, dressed in full battle gear, were shown in photographs and TV footage smashing glass panels and aiming high-powered guns at Tupas' family members and supporters.

Tupas, accused of multiple counts of graft, had managed to secure a temporary restraining order from the Court of Appeals minutes after the morning of the capitol breach.

The assault has elicited vast criticism from various quarters, including the Commission on Human Rights as well as lawmakers, mainly Tupas' party mates at the Liberal Party wing of Orbos, and triggered calls for investigation.

Really angry

Dalida said he became angry after seeing footages of the assault.

"He had the briefing, and we explained to the men that we were dispatched to serve the order. We should not do this and do that. When I saw the footage, I was really angry," he said, recalling that he was particularly irked by the smashing of the glass and panels.

However, Dalida said he remembered that the policemen shown breaking glass did it to prevent a stampede in case a shootout broke out.

"Whatever the lapses and excesses, I think that's a judgment call," he said, citing for instance that the policemen had a "purpose" in smashing the glass panels at the capitol's third floor.

Dalida said earlier admitted that the breaking of glass, intrusions and smashing of glass panels were not part of the assault order he had issued.

Commented Orbos after the hearing: "We rest their patience. We could have certainly taken a direct hand in preventing violence if he found it right to stop his excessive use of force, in which he had submitted to a media interview."

Very happy

Dalida testified that in the Jan. 21 post-operations report he submitted to PNP Director General Oscar Calderon, he had recommended awards for the team. You can (accordingly) congregated" orders.

"When I did that job, when no blood was shed, I was very happy. I was very happy that I was able to perform my orders without any bloodshed. I was very grateful," he said when Orbos pressed him on the awards.

But any award would depend on the results of the investigation of the internal affairs bureau, Dalida said.

Besides, he added, investigators had shown that policemen pointed their firearms and aimed not at Tupas' children and supporters.

Orbos, however, insisted that this was belied by the video footage.

Dalida stated that his actions were prompted by a CIDG memorandum to clarify if Ang's alleged regional and police directors to remove normal operations in areas affected by the series of (internal) orders from the Gen. Ludovico, and close those of (illegal) assemblies and barricades.

He said that he presented the memorandum to be regular, and that he did not see the need to verify if the PNP could enforce the dismissal of a government official even before the latter could appeal it.

'They attacked us'

Tupas, 74, maintained that the attack was "unprovoked."

"For the record, I received the official copy of the Ombudsman decision only [on] Jan. 24, by registered mail. Most important: the Ombudsman has no power to dismiss local elective officials," he said at the start of the hearing.

Tupas Jr., who in TV footage was seen being dragged and pushed to the floor by the assault team, said: "They attacked us. We tried to speak, we held our peace, but we were so much against the armed [police]. They smashed the three glass panels, they were pointing guns toward civilians."

He said that during the melee, a policeman even turned and threatened to shoot him.

"At their eyes, I could see that they were ready to kill," he added.

At a press conference moments in Camp Crame, Director Edgardo Doromal, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), admitted that the assault team should not have provoked the incident.

But Doromal said this was "necessary" to quell Tupas' supporters.

"We admit that some [police] used pointed their guns. But it was a necessary reaction because the civilians were told to sit but had attempted to stand up. This is part of our training. This is used to caution someone who does not follow police orders," he said.

No violation of procedures

Doromal had earlier been sent to Iloilo to investigate police actions during the assault.

The other day, he said that based on the findings of the "very impartial" investigation, there was no "overkill" on the part of the police and "no violation of police procedures."

Doromal yesterday said that if he were the ground commander, he would attempt to shoot for being "overzealous" in the part of the police and "no violation of police procedures."

Doromal also said the police force was "not enough to clear the area."

He said the PNP had fielded 200 policemen against an estimated 1,000 supporters of Tupas "with the support of heavily armed men behind or inside the building."

As a result of the investigation, Doromal said, he would recommend to PNP chief Calderon that members of the assault team undergo a "refresher course."

But for all that, the policemen should be "commended" for the way they handled the situation, Doromal said.

He said he had recommended no charges against members of the assault team.

Ombudsman probe

But in a letter to Orbos, Ombudsman Gutierrez said she had ordered the formation of a task force that would look into the assault, "to determine if any public officer should be answerable by law."

Gutierrez also said her office "has nothing to do with the (re-)presidential" of the dismissal order on Tupas. With reports from Norman Bordadora and Norman Bordadora

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Control over Montalban facility rages; MMDA steps in to resolve issue

By Edson C. Tordoc Jr. and Tara Quinsaat

TENSION PEAKED SOUTH OF METRO MANILA yesterday, pitting garbage in the Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility in Rodriguez, Rizal were dumped yesterday when the Rizal provincial government invaded piles of garbage in the controversial sanitary landfill, the subject of a turf war between provincial and local government officials.

Heavy trucks were used to level the garbage to three meters, 10 provincial legal officer Delgado Soriano said the provincial government was exercising its ownership over the landfill after the provincial government assumed supervision of the facility three months ago.

Rodriguez Mayor Isidro Ortega, who refused to recognize the "takeover," is crying foul. "I will consult my lawyer on the appropriate legal action. I am puzzled about their agenda as dinurog nga ang pipes," Ortega told the Inquirer.

Ortega ambushed the strong people, accusing him an agreement with private firm Metalfred Global and Kalikasan Kayo to explore the possibility of building a methane gas power plant on the 110-hectare landfill. The wrong equipment came shouldn't operate, ago. The provincial government, however, declared the agreement invalid, famous and such agreements should have passed through the provincial board.

The provincial board voted to dismantle the paper. Tuesday but Ortega quickly had the landfill closed and barricaded. But following a meeting that evening with provincial officials presided over by Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, Ortega reopened the landfill, pretending a package ruse.

The landfill receives truck from 13 out of 17 towns and cities in Metro Manila. Ortega thought the dump received the problem with the provincial government and the waste concession to be profitable.

The mayor alleged that the people from the provincial government "were accused by intimidation."

But provincial public relations officer Jonathan Rizon told the Inquirer that he could never in the same "to accuse is from the New People's Army rules threatened to bomb the area."

Emotions and the workers only meant to lessen the landfill.

"It just so happened that the walls were there," he said, adding that the provincial board acted. Ortega reminded him he allowed access to the provincial government about the mining project, but the mayor allegedly ignored the letter.

"We are just asking for coordination. Mr. Ortega should at least show some respect for the provincial government," Soriano told the reporters.

While it had no jurisdiction over quarreling local officials of Rizal, MMDA officials spoke out with provincial officials and Rodriguez Mayor Isidro Ortega last night over the controversial landfill in Montalban.

MMDA General Manager Robert Barbers discussed with the incensed yesterday that Chair Bayani Fernando and other MMDA officials would not want that Rizal officials have no right to discuss their conflict at the dump, the longest disposal site for Metro's waste.

"We have to make them realize that they cannot close the dump because doing so would affect Metro Manila. The solution is provincial issue after to do and does not want to look into the legality of what they are doing," Barbers has said.

WHILE local government officials are locked in a dispute over the Montalban dump, environmental activists and concerned citizens join the Eco Waste Coalition's campaign to stop the opening of landfills in the country at the local village in Quezon City yesterday. The group believes an ecology-based approach, and not landfills, is needed to help solve the growing garbage problem in the country. RAFFY LERMA

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Court stops dismantling of Makati City billboard

By Tara Quinsaat

A MAKATI COURT STOPPED YESTERDAY the dismantling of an electronic billboard on a public park in the Guadalupe Riverfront in Makati City.

Judge Dennis Logarta of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 143 issued the order preventing the enactment of the injunction sought by the billboard's owners against the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). The department considered the structure illegal and was set to demolish it.

In granting the restraining order on Monday and Tuesday, the judge said the DPWH had given the billboard's owners, Jumah Advertising, until today to take down its electronic display on the southbound side of Edsa on Guadalupe Bridge. The space was considered government property, making the construction illegal according to the DPWH.

But Logarta said unresolved issues surrounding the city-approved installation of the electronic display "prompt this court to take action while the issuance of writ of preliminary injunction."

"... Pending the conclusion of trial on the instant case, a writ of preliminary injunction is hereby issued prohibiting the defendants (DPWH) from dismantling plaintiff's subject billboard," the judge said in her two-page order.

The ad firm is asking the court to stop permanently the DPWH from demolishing the electronic display in the city-owned Guadalupe Park, which was authorized by a City Council Resolution in February 2006.

City Hall defended the ad firm, citing the resolution that allowed the billboard's construction. The resolution authorized the local government to enter into an agreement with the private firm for the rental of space in the public park for advertisements.

Under the resolution, the city would have control over the commercial content that will be displayed on the billboard screen. City Hall will also grant 120-15-second slots in total of 54 minutes' duration, from 6 a.m. to 12 midnight, daily operation. It is to 12 midnight in order not to interfere entertainment and play city government projects.

"We are puzzled why the electronic billboard is being singled out. If the ordinance permits typhoons and we believe that billboards do not really sound. What's so wrong a national road, as to use can be used but we are property," said Makati administrator Giselle Arroyo.

Arroyo added that the ad firm could take measures to address problems like blocking light by stabilizer, but dismantling should not be an option.

He said City Hall had plans to use the billboard as a "very stable source of information," including metro-wide traffic data to give motorists real-time updates.

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Armored van driver in Skyway mishap may face raps

By Tarra Quismundo

THE DRIVER OF THE ARMORED VAN that fell early Wednesday night from the Skyway onto vehicles below in Makati City could face criminal charges.

The incident killed a bank teller and injured four others. The driver, Reynaldo Hiro, is himself in critical condition because of injuries he sustained during the crash. Nine other vehicles were damaged.

Insp. Oscar Alaluddin, investigator from the Makati Traffic Enforcement Unit, said motorists that they could be held liable for the accident.

The van may have been going too fast as it went to the exit. The driver may be liable for reckless imprudence resulting in homicide and physical injuries," Alaluddin told the Inquirer.

Hiro, 38, was driving the armored van (TDD-633) northbound along the Skyway toward the Gate in Cle Avenue, Bonifacio Global City, at 9 p.m. on Wednesday when it fell, landing onto vehicles below.

One of his passengers, bank teller Emmanuel Magnaye, 25, was killed on the spot while another passenger, Roberto Perez, 32, was seriously injured. Police said the van was heading from a bank branch in Calamba City to the Makati Central Business District when the accident happened.

The fall crushed the roof of a white Toyota Revo (UJB-105) and slightly damaged a Mitsubishi Adventure (SSK-731) and two Honda Civics (once number: HUF-242 and WCE-272) that were at the intersection of Kalayaan Avenue (formerly Pasay Road) and Fort Bonifacio Global Cityâ€“Makati Diversion Road.

Alaluddin said two passengers of the Revo also suffered minor injuries and were both brought to the Makati Medical Center for treatment.

ONE PERSON was killed and four others were hurt when a van fell from the Skyway, damaging four other vehicles in Makati City and creating a huge traffic jam early Wednesday evening.

4 vendors arrested for dog meat trade

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FOUR VENDORS WERE ARRESTED early yesterday morning as some 80 kilos of dog meat were confiscated by Quezon Animals Inc. operatives of the Manila Police District (MPD).

Police Mobility #5, formerly in the Cubao area, was tasked to be stationed in the profitable dog meat trade route, tipped off by the Quezon Mother) around 2 a.m., according to a report of the MPD-5th Civil Mobile.

Police said the suspects could be charged with violation of Republic Act No. 8485 or the Animal Welfare Law and City Ordinance 029 that seeks to prevent cruelty to animals.

Mobile reportedly admitted they sold live canines was engaged in illegal dog meat trade because of customers demand. She said the meat is cooked, sold for P120 per kilo, soon to be sent to Baguio City.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said he instructed the police and the city's veterinary inspection board to search out for dog meat vendors. "Eating dog meat is unacceptable because dogs are pets and companion animals," Atienza said.

He assured with a group can satisfy that dog meat consumption area not only cruel to animals but should be could also be fatal to the person who eat the meat.

The Animal Kingdom Foundation Inc. (AKFI) joined the search-ing following the death last year of a 6-year-old girl who was given dog meat by neighbors who were having a drinking session.

An AKFI spokesman said the girl could have been infected with rabies. He explained that the virus lives more than a rabid dog could eaten. the more endings through dog meat or bites not but bleeding gums. The virus then passes through the lymph nodes and multiplies in the brain, resulting in the death of the victim.

He said the mechanism prevented for rabies could range from 4-6 months to 1.5 years.

The AKFI added that eating healthy dogs could be a dangerous as eating rabid ones because most rabies usually incubated the saliva transmitted to slaughterhouses.

Did you know

ACCORDING to a 2005 survey by the Philippine Statistics Office, about 1.2 million Filipinos had worked abroad since January-September 2005. Of this number 54 returned or about 240,000 came from Metro Manila and 17.5 percent or more than 200,000 are from Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon). Italy around 10,000 or 1.4 percent came from Mimaropa (Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan).

Cyrill. Bonalesia
Inquirer Research

Metro-Briefs

End of chase

AFTER a yearlong manhunt, the police finally arrested on Wednesday night one of 13 robbers still at large in Manila's most wanted people in Tagaytay City. Police recommend Bobby "Bambi" Tapon, 36, of Barangay Mahayhay, Dasmariñas, Cavite, for the murder of Alex Mallorquin, Barangay Bandera Bautista at parklEspan, Malate, Manila, on Dec. 8, 2005. Another day after a fight in a Barangay Bagumbayan, north Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Lieutenant Orlando Jr., chief of the City's Drug Enforcement Unit, Olongapo police, who other day-general arrested two suspects in connection to shabu, with a 25-year-old neighbor identified as Dee Bobo. The raiding team also arrested the residents of shabu, drug paraphernalia, and a loaded pistols from Tapon. Tapon is being linked to several drug, murder and holdup cases filed in other Luzon courts in Metropolitan metropolis.

Jocelyn R. Ki

Lola Marita's book launch

MARITA Manuel-Carreño will launch her first book of poetry and essays at 4 p.m. today at the Ateneo de Manila University's Rizal Library. Carreño, who is also a professor at the Ateneo's Department of Literature, will launch her book, "Lola Marita's Book," which is a collection of her poems and essays. The book is published by the Ateneo de Manila University Press. Carreño is a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines. She is a member of the Philippine Writers Guild and the Philippine Association of Writers and Artists. She is also a member of the Philippine Writers Guild and the Philippine Association of Writers and Artists.

CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION FACTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

INFANT MORTALITY

• The infant mortality rate in the Philippines has declined from 34 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1993 to 29 deaths in 2003. (National Demographic and Health Survey 2003)

• Infant mortality correlates with the quality of maternal and child care accessible to mothers and children. Mortality levels in urban areas are much lower than those in the rural areas. Mortality is inversely related to the mother's education level and wealth status (National Demographic and Health Survey 2003)

• 84% of infants in the Philippines have an elevated mortality risk due to the following factors: The mother is too young (below age 18) or too old (age 35 and older), the birth interval is too short (less than two years) or the mother has had too many prior births (more than three) (National Demographic and Health Survey 2003)

• Top 10 causes of infant mortality (DOH Philippine Health Statistics 2002)

1. Various perinatal conditions*	42.8%
2. Pneumonia	11.1%
3. Bacterial sepsis**	5.1%
4. Diarrhea/ Gastroenteritis	5.1%
5. Congenital malformation of the heart	4.7%
6. Congenital pneumonia	3.8%
7. Other congenital malformation	2.3%
8. Disorders related to short gestation and low birth weight	2.1%
9. Septicemia	1.8%
10. Measles	1.8%

*stillbirth, asphyxia, jaundice, entangled umbilical cord etc.
**Caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and other parasites entering the baby's body from the mother either during pregnancy, labor or delivery. Bacteria may also be transmitted through medical equipment such as catheters, IV tubes and other surgical equipment.

BREASTFEEDING RATE

• Breastfeeding in the Philippines remains steady between 67% and 80% since 1993. (National Demographic and Health Survey 2003)

• The Philippines has a HIGHER EVER-BREASTFED RATE than the United States and selected European countries. (WHO Global Data Bank on Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding)

Philippines (1998)	88%
Germany (1998)	88%
Italy (1998)	85%
Netherlands (2001)	75%
UK (2000)	69%
USA (1998)	64%
France (1998)	49%

• The average duration of breastfeeding increased from 12 months in 1998 to 14 months in 2003. (National Demographic and Health Survey 2003)

INFANT FORMULA USAGE

• Consumption of infant formulas declined by 5%, from 12% to 9%. (2003 AC Nielsen Retail Audit)

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Knesset eyes action against embattled president

JERUSALEM — ISRAELI LAWMAKERS were considering Thursday whether to suspend or impeach President Moshe Katsav, who is facing rape charges, after a parliamentary session that was at times raucous and at others subdued as "personal, horrible lies," part of a broad campaign to destroy him.

On Wednesday Katsav asked the parliament to temporarily suspend him from his office while he fought to clear his name. But opposition was building for lawmakers to open unprecedented impeachment proceedings against the president, who has denied the charges, including that pressure forced former in-way Hagai to sit him and allow the contacts held.

"Under these circumstances, there is no doubt in my mind that the presidential duties cannot be fulfilled by the president," Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

A parliamentary committee was due to convene Thursday to debate Katsav's request for a temporary leave.

Polls published in the country's two main circulation dailies Thursday showing strong support for a parliamentary first motion against him.

A poll of 526 people by the Global institute for Public Opinion showed 71 percent of respondents saying he should resign at once.

Maariv newspaper ran a survey of 466 people by pollster Mitvalim, which put the percent of those questioned through Katsav should step down.

Resignation or impeachment would deprive Katsav of his presidential immunity. The 61-year-old former cavalry corporal is to start this summer if he leaves office early, parliamentary speaker Dalia Itzik will become acting president until the parliament chooses a replacement.

Impeachment requires a three-fourths majority in parliament, and analysts said it might be difficult to muster such a majority. In contrast, a majority or a public ministry investigation could approve his request to stand down temporarily.

Attorney General Meni Mazuz said that before officially pressing the grand caps, Israel should wait ahead of police, he would give the president an opportunity to plead his case.

Stating his speech Wednesday Katsav said he would resign if officially indicted. "I will not stay in this house for one more second, I will resign," he pledged.

The presidency, a ceremonial post, was traditionally filled by statesmen and national leaders who were expected to serve as the moral light of the country. Investigators that Katsav used his position to favor himself or former employees have heightened hostility.

In a country awkwardly embedded upside in the official residence Wednesday night, Katsav portrayed his successful and assumed the pallor and rarely of wanting to gather evening has drawn, using more like "witch hunt" and "McCarthyism." He angrily pounded his podium and his voice rendered during a wedding chamber that lasted nearly an hour.

"Don't believe the libel, the defamation, the lies. There is only one truth ... I am the suspect of two of the most attacks in the history of the state of Israel," he said, presenting with a personal danger, consulting on the podium and shouting at a reporter. He pledged to "fight to my last breath, even if it makes a world war, to clear my name."

He refused to answer questions from reporters as his first appearance before them since the scandal broke six months ago.

Many of parliament's 120 lawmakers — 61 were from required — signed a motion to begin impeachment proceedings, and nearly 75 have already said they would vote to remove Katsav, according to the office of lawmaker Zehava Galon, who initiated the letter. AP

KATZAV gives a fiery press conference Jan. 24. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Panama's Noriega wants to go home again

NORIEGA

PANAMA — Former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega wants to go home, ignoring warnings from the government and fight a murder case against him when he is released on a US prison term for drug trafficking, his lawyer said on Wednesday. The United States put Panama on Tuesday set a hope. It release date for Noriega, who was captured by US forces following the 1989 invasion of Panama and sought to Florida to face charges that he allowed Colombian traffickers to use his country as a transit hub for US-bound drugs. The former military strongman, who was officially in Panama's care from 1992 to 1999, was convicted in a Miami federal court in April 1992 of trafficking, racketeering and conspiracy. He was initially sentenced to 40 years in prison but the term was later reduced to 30 years. Noriega, 72, is unlikely to go free when he is released from the Miami area, particularly where he served most of his time in a specially built 25-square-meter cell dubbed the "psychiatric cell." He still faces deportation back to both Panama, where he was convicted in absentia to 14 years each for murder, and to France, where he is wanted for alleged money laundering.

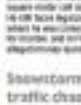
Reuters

Snowstorms kill 4, bring traffic chaos to Europe

PARIS — Severe winter swept across eastern and central Europe for a second day on Wednesday, setting their people, stranding thousands of air travelers and leaving hundreds of drivers trapped on freezing, bypassed roads. A 11-year-old German skater, the southern Spanish city of Seville after a snowstorm left 20 cm (nine inches) of high winds, while three people died in German road accidents, including a two drivers who had a head-on collision with a lorry. The sudden wintry snap, which followed a period of unseasonably warm weather across Europe, also reinforced a welcome relief to ski resorts in the French and Swiss Alps, many of which had previously been unable to open for lack of snow. Some 12 cm of snow fell in the Swiss mountains, 20 cm in northern Spain and 30 cm in northern Germany. Motorways were blocked over five and three days, More than 100,000 people were without power on Wednesday. Power lines to 60,000 homes in a multicentral central Europe were still down after being severed by falling trees and the weight of snow. Some 30,000 people in freezing conditions in southern France endured their fourth day of a blackout that was not due to end until Friday. In Austria, where 12,000 households were cut off, officials reopened power lines were hampered by the rain. In Germany, Reuters weather left thousands of travelers stranded at airports in Britain, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Switzerland.

AFP

Kerry will not enter presidential race



KERRY

WASHINGTON — Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who narrowly lost the presidency to President Bush in 2004, announced Wednesday that he is not going to seek a nomination for the White House, saying he preferred to concentrate on the new Senate majority to come his as and to US environmental issues. "Ten years since, running since brought to be tempted to try again," Kerry said, narrowly lost 2004 case. At the instructions of a 20-minutes speech fulfilling Bush's Iraq policy not the Senate floor. "There are essential reasons to lead to continue that fight now. But I've concluded that this isn't the time for me to mount a presidential campaign," Kerry's announcement, though it came in conversations shows, was not a surprise. He was bowing to a Democratic field that is filling with candidates, particularly Senator Barack Obama of Illinois and Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, who both got into the race this month. Many Democratic front-runner Howard Dean would decide not to run after considering how much support he could recruit, already, most of his aides from his 2004 campaign have moved on. Kerry, 63, another run for 2008 Senate terms 2008, as was said.

AFP

The WORLD

Edna Lawrence B. Cuaso

Senate panel rejects Bush troop 'surge'

A Pro-ERSO1 rooting sculptor hands beside insane Hussein shrine in Karbala, Iraq Jan. 24. REUTERS

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush on Wednesday received a stinging rebuke of his Iraq policy, as a Senate panel approved a measure condemning his plan to pour more US troops into the war-ravaged country.

By a 12-to-nine vote, the Senate foreign relations committee condemned Bush's plan to send an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq, just one day after he pleaded with Americans to give his plan a chance to work.

The measure now moves to the Senate floor for debate, possibly as early as next week.

But US Vice President Dick Cheney on Wednesday bluntly dismissed the congressional objections, even as members of his own Republican party broke ranks to support the measure.

"My intention was to send the first of many messages—direct and unequivocal—to the president: Stop what you are doing," Biden said during the hearing.

The Democratic chairman added that he was likely to submit a more expansive, binding legislation if Bush fails to heed the message of the proposed symbolic measure.

Several lawmakers at Wednesday's hearing, including Sen. Robert Menendez, said the symbolic measure fell "a far least 'that can be done'" in effect American-led displacement with measures deeply unpopular Iraq policy.

The committee hearing was held after Bush delivered his annual State of the Union address Tuesday, in which he made his case for additional US troops to Iraq.

Dismayed, however, opposition Democrats after the speech accused the president of "irresponsibly" leading America into war and called for a withdrawal of US forces, in a blunt rebuttal to the president's address late Tuesday, and they continued to heap disdain on the president's Iraq strategy during Wednesday's hearing.

"The war in Iraq is fueling terrorism," said Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer. "It's draining our treasury ... It is weakening us to our core indeed."

The draft bill calls on the United States to "transfer, under an appropriately expedited timeline, responsibility for internal security and halting sectarian violence in Iraq to the government of Iraq."

But it is only one of several proposals slamming Bush's surge plan, including some that would cap the number of troops, cut off funding for the deployment of additional troops or gradually pull US forces from Iraq altogether. AFP

Accused Canadian serial killer fed bodies to his pigs, jury told

NEW WESTMINSTER, CANADA—A long-haired man charged with murdering 26 women fed some of their bodies to his pigs, a jury heard Wednesday on the third day of the prosecution trial of accused serial killer Robert William Pickton.

"He would take them into [a] room and feed them to the pigs," Andy Bell, a one-time worker on Pickton's farm told police in a taped conversation, played during Pickton's interrogation.

"Oh, hell," shocked Pickton, when shown Bell's statement. "Penny cooler in there, aren't they?" he added, laughing.

The trial of Pickton for six of the murders of mostly drug-addicted prostitutes from a seedy Vancouver neighborhood opened Monday with a grab of gruesome and shocking details offered by prosecutors.

Pickton, who pleaded innocent to the six murders, will stand trial for 20 others at a later date.

But police suspect him in the disappearances of some 65 women from the Vancouver neighborhood over several years. On Monday prosecutor Darrell Pruett said that while in prison Pickton had confessed to an undercover police man that he had killed 49 women in all, and had hoped to kill one more to make it "an even 50."

On Monday Pruett also told jurors that police had found DNA evidence from both Dobson and Mona Wilson, one of the alleged victims, on a gun and a dildo in his trailer home.

Other evidence, he said, included two women's hands, hands and parts of their feet police found stuffed in buckets in a refrigerator known on Pickton's suburban farm.

But in a taped interrogation played to the jury Wednesday, Pickton told a policeman he used the plastic dildo as a shower for the guy when he shot boars with his .22 rifle, gun.

"I shouldn't be talking but I'll tell you this, uh, I use the .22 sometimes, I do big, big boars," he told police sergeant Bill Hardy.

The gun was found, said Pickton, to be "just plastic around it, but [a] quarter, the same down a hole in." AFP

World's oldest 'no longer wanted to live'

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO—The world's oldest person, Emiliano Mercado del Toro, died Wednesday in his Puerto Rico home at the age of 113, his family said.

"Don Emiliano," as he was known in the 119 communal-wealth island, died after being struck by fever and breathing problems, his nurse Yesenia Ruiz told local radio.

"He had asthma overnight and died in the morning," said Ruiz, whose uncle died at her home in Barbosa in the northwest.

Del Toro, who would have turned 114 in August, had lost the will to live, she said.

"Sometimes he would shout that he no longer wanted to live. He was tired of living," Ruiz said.

Born on August 21, 1891 in Cabo Rojo in the Caribbean island southwest, he was 115 years, five months and three days old when he died.

The Guinness World Records book named him the oldest man in the world in January 2005. He became the world's oldest person in December after an American woman, Elizabeth Bolden, died at 116. AFP

EMILIANO Mercado del Toro in photo taken Jan. 25, 2005. AP

An appeal to Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Jr., Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, and our distinguished Councilors

Compel Federal Land to follow the Quezon City Zoning Ordinance in building the Capital Towers Project

We, the residents of Montgomery Place & Le Mariche hereby manifest our opposition to "The Capital Towers" project that will rise on E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave. in front of the National Children's Hospital & Trinity University:

1 **We oppose Federal Land's request for an Exception to the Commercial 2 (C2) classification of the area under the Amended Quezon City Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.** This will allow them to build beyond the prescribed height and density limits of our area which is of great concern to the surrounding residential communities. Right now, Federal Land plans to build 3 towers – one 38 storey and two 42 storey structures – totalling more than 1,500 new units on a 6.88 hectare lot.

2 **We oppose Federal Land's request for an Exception to Article VI, Section 4, No. 13 of the Quezon City Zoning Ordinance which requires a 1:1 ratio between parking spaces and condominium units.** They want a 1:3 ratio claiming that their target market is composed primarily of public transportation users. Given that their smallest unit costs Php6,500,000 per unit, it's unlikely that anyone willing to spend that much does not own or will not aspire for a car.

3 **We are convinced that the project is hastily planned and that the impact on traffic, parking, flooding, water, sewage, soil cave-in, natural light, air, privacy and the effects of construction to our communities have been de-emphasized.** We have sat through presentations during the public hearings and we believe that FL's findings are incomplete and inadequate. We want their technical studies to be assessed by our own consultants.

4 **We protest in the strongest possible terms the blatant pre-selling of the project while our environmental concerns have not been addressed.** To date, the HLURB has certified that no License to Sell has been issued. The HLURB, in a Notice of Violation dated 30 November 2006, strongly reprimanded Federal Land and fined them. Despite this, they continue to market the project in invitation-only gatherings.

Recently, officials of certain barangays in District IV signed a manifesto in favor of the Capital Towers because of the "monetary benefits." **These benefits were merely alleged and never substantiated nor quantified by Federal Land or Barangay Kabuyaos during several public hearings held at QC Hall.** The QC Zoning Ordinance is an instrument hereto, considers paramount the rights of existing communities to public health, safety and welfare. Thus, the burden is on Federal Land to prove that the Capital Towers project upholds these rights.

To summarize, by granting the exception, Federal Land will be allowed to build a massive development on E. Rodriguez Sr. which lacks sustainable infrastructure. We already experience air pollution, traffic jams, and flash floods on a regular basis. Adding 1,500 new households will adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare of existing and future residents in this congested area.

We urge the QC Council led by **Vice-Mayor Herbert Bautista & Majority Floor Leader Ariel Inton Jr.** to vote on the basis of Responsible Development.

- **Deny all applications for permits of The Capital Towers as it is currently planned or conceptualized.**
- **Deny the application for the Certificate of Exception from the QC Zoning Ordinance.**
- **Compel Federal Land to apply for permits on a per building basis.**

We believe that true progress is not measured by the height and breadth of physical structures nor the promise of economic gain. True progress is achieved when the laws and ordinances that envision to protect the right of every private citizen to health, safety and a decent quality of life are duly administered and enforced.

Mileen Catan, President, MPHA — Winston Lim, President, LMHA

Updates: http://www.montgomeryplace.net • Contact us: noexception@montgomeryplace.net • This is a paid advertisement.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Suns shine;** Pacers spoil Shaq's return /A22.

SPORTS

Editor Teodoro S. Mahinay

■ **Open gets** FG, ICTSI support /A23

Beermen, Kings target 2-0 semis leads

Caguioa's 34, PBA ref create quite a stir

FROM MARC CAGUIOA'S 34 POINTS TO a referee being tapped to officiate a game between Asi's powerhouses, there's a growing buzz around the Philippine Basketball Association's Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup semifinals.

In a league that has seen spectacular individual scoring performances from the all-time greats, Caguioa's 34 points in Barangay Ginebra's 113-108 victory over Talk 'N Text in Game 1 of the best-of-seven series should have gained for nothing but a minor blip in the conference.

Especially since Caguioa has already breached the 30-point barrier 20 times since joining the league in 2004.

Except that it came against Talk 'N Text, a team that (before Friday's game) seems to have lost the knack for winning games.

Of his 11 highest point outputs as a pro, four came against Talk 'N Text. Of his seven highest production, three were against the Phone Pals.

The other team Caguioa loves scoring against is Red Bull, which the Kings gunned down for 34 of their 38 points in the fourth quarter of last Wednesday's 108-104 victory over Coca-Cola.

Meanwhile, a PBA referee has been tapped as the neutral official in a former Basketball League Chinese Basketball Association-sanctioned game.

Rahmon Ting-Ja, who worked as an international referee before, will join a former ref and a Chinese counterpart in the

CARUMBA! /A26

Henkel, Cebuana prevail

MAGNOLIA'S Jeff Yeo sneaks a lay-up under the arms of Hensel Sison's jaw. Allied after driving past a throng of defenders.

By Jasmine W. Payo

HENKEL SISTA SILENCED Magnolia's top gunners to hammer out a 66-61 victory in the PBL Silver Cup yesterday at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym.

Many millions paced the Super Seasons' balance charge with 11 points, while Lawrence Bonoc, Rhid Allen and Conrad Benosa each saw the scoring in the final period as Alaska's firm completed the quarterfinal unit.

"Our target was to let them give the ball to (Jimi) Rhee and stop their shooters," said Alaska coach Caloy Garcia.

Rhee, Magnolia's 6-foot-8 Nigerian dominant, poured in 18 points and hauled 19 rebounds. But top gunners Reuben Conrado and Jeff Chan failed to figure in the offensive equation.

Cebuanas Gladiator Jhoy Dalada and Ate Glo ditched the third quarterfinal berth after an 83-72 Lo triumph over Telethich.

The Hinoreanon turned to Jim Bono, Bong Hontiveros and Macky Escalona in the switch to score 11 points each and regain control of the match in the final two minutes.

"We knew Telethich was tough, we needed to match their energy," said Hinoreanon coach Luigi Trillo.

Stepping up in crunch time, Kramer and Escalona combined for 13 points in the final seven minutes.

Cantrello shot a measly five points after averaging 26.5 in the Spinners' last two wins. Chan, coming off a 23-point performance, went 0-for-6 in 25 minutes.

The Super Bowlers advanced against the Mail-and-More Cruisers while Gilmores Distillers meets up against the Barlesa Grants Fort Masters.

Both Mail and More and Harbour Centre need only to win once to reach the semis where Region-PELU and Toyota Otis are awaiting.

The Titans spooked the Moneymen with a 10-0 blast sandwiched by two triples from Kris Vrieswijk to wrest the lead at 64-63 early in the fourth quarter.

Kramer and Escalona nailed three of their four free throw shots for a 66-all deadlock, but another Titans spurt left the Moneymen trailing again at 71-66.

Just when the Titans seemed poised to pull away, Kramer and Escalona started attacking the basket to move within a point, 71-70, with 2:30 remaining left.

Both sides had their chances to cap the Moneymen's pursuit. Tito tally for a 75-71 advantage in the 1:20 mark.

Top scorers:

First Quarter:

CEBUANA GLADIATOR (83) — Hono 20, Dela 28, Escalona 11, Kramer 10, De Leon 2, Dang 2, Dela Cruz 2, Tolo 0, Lopez 0, Ong 0

TELETECH (72) — Cuevas 11, Magsayo 13, Valenzuela 7, Villanueva 9, Manalastas 7, Mercader 6, Ilao 5, Estrella 2, Guerrero 0, Gonzalez 2, Abrajado 5, Cervantes 0

Second Quarter:

HENKEL (66) — Rhee 18, Allen 11, Bonoc 10, Mendoza 8, Gregorio 5, Manalastas 2, Dalida 2, Allen 1, Pilapil 0, Jose 2, Bolado 0

MAGNOLIA (61) — Chan 19, Gaddi 14, Villanueva 8, Bunsit 6, Sumalo 6, Aquino 4, Salonoy 2, Santos 2, Jones 0, Tapia 0, Pacquiao 0

Scores: 19-15, 36-29, 49-45, 66-61

There's no flaw in process, SBP points out

By Jane Manaysay

THE FLAW IN THE SUSPICIOUS PROCESS which the Basketball Association of the Philippines pointed out Wednesday had effectively been wiped out by an agreement entered into by BAP officials.

The humiliating blindfolded rig Philippine chairfind this yesterday with PBA commissioner Noli Eala, the SBP's designated spokesperson, even among BAP officials "for their unexpected criticism of the draft."

"The problem with the BAP is that they always conveniently forget or deliberately disregard agreements entered into by their own officials," said Eala.

"Then, they (BAP officials) claim flaws in the process, which is simply their warped distortion of the truth," he added.

BAP acting president Christian Tan had insisted that the Pilas endorsed commissioner Jaypee Belmonte for SBP and Philippine Basketball last year was not followed to the letter when the SBP banned the 20-man board instead of the customary 15 of the board being elected during the "unity congress" by the entire BAP and PBA membership.

However, SBP executive director Ricky Vargas said the SBP's constitution and bylaws called for a set of officers composed of 12 each from the BAP and PBA, which both organizations will nominate, and a neutral officialdom from the 25-man board of trustees.

Vargas warned that former BAP president Jose Lina and BAP chair Michele Lhuillier had affixed their signatures to the SBP constitution and by-laws crafted by the three-man panel of businessmen Manny V. Pangilinan, Bernie Atienza of Philippine Basketball and Lina to ensure there is a

EALA: Warned

"Now that document was signed, Mr. Lina resigned down as BAP president," Vargas said.

"But it doesn't mean that if Lina resigned, what he signed was already considered null and void," added Vargas, who went with SBP chair Pangilinan, Eala, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and PLDT executive Al Panlilio in the Olympic congress in Geneva, Switzerland last weekend to brief Pilas officials on the progress of the unification process being undertaken by SBP.

Estrada took over as BAP president when Lina resigned only to be ousted when he forged a unity pact with Pangilinan without consulting the BAP board.

According to the SBP constitution, an executive board composed of the chairman, vice-chairman, president, executive vice president, executive director and treasurer, among others, would be elected to serve as interim officials.

Tan also questioned the interim capacity of Harold Bacon when Eala said would be decided by acclamation during the unity congress on Feb. 5 at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City.

"There is a reason in the inserting provisions in the constitution and bylaws of the SBP. We have to go through a healing process and put a structure that will hold the entire organization and its membership," said Vargas.

The interim officials, he explained, would be tasked to put the house in order before another set of officers takes over in the 2008 SBP national elections.

Vargas also stressed that during the transitory period, the SBP would begin validating its membership.

The BAP boasts of 66 member organizations while the PB now has 28.

"To be quite frank about it, some BAP members don't exist anymore and some don't even fall under the SBP criteria for membership," said Vargas. "But just the same, we're including everybody."

On the election by acclamation, Eala said there's no need to submit the election of officers to the congress since under the SBP article of incorporation, the board, and not the congress, would elect the officers.

The board, on the other hand, is chosen by the congress.

But in the case of the SBP, the three men panel agreed that in the interim, the board will be composed of 12 members each from the PBA and the BAP and one neutral member in order to expedite the formation of the new organization and regain accreditation.

"They agreed in this through Mr. Joey Lina, who in fact nominated 12 names in the interim board who were included in the approved and signed articles of incorporation," said Eala.

Suns shine; Pacers spoil Shaq's return

NEW YORK—THE PHOENIX SUNS beat the New York Knicks 112-107 on Wednesday to extend their record 23-game winning streak of the season.

Boris Diaw scored 20 points, 16 in the second half, as the Suns came alive in the third quarter to knock off the Knicks.

Phoenix (34-9) is the first team to have two 15-game winning streaks in a single season since the Los Angeles Lakers did it in the 1999-2000 season. The Suns will set a franchise record for consecutive wins if they beat the Bucks in Milwaukee on Friday.

Steve Nash had 22 points and 14 assists for the Suns, who erased 10 points in the second half and held off a fourth-quarter comeback bid by New York.

Jason Richardson scored 30 points, 16 in the second half, as the Suns came alive in the third quarter to knock off the Knicks.

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Steve Nash had 22 points and 14 assists for the Suns, who erased 10 points in the second half and held off a fourth-quarter comeback bid by New York.

Jason Richardson scored 22 points and Kurleon Williams added 21 as the Detroit Pistons won their third straight game, 103-93, over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

The Philadelphia 76ers won on the road for just the third time this season, downing the Cleveland Cavaliers 116-115 in double overtime.

Chris Bosh scored a season-high 35 points as the Toronto Raptors rallied from a 15-point fourth quarter deficit to edge the New Orleans Hornets 98-96.

—Reuters

THE PISTONS' Rasheed Wallace dunks against the Bobcats' Sean Dockins

Alcano ready to defend Korea title

REIGNING WORLD POOL CHAMPION Ronnie "Ronnie Colombo" Alcano is looking forward to keeping his US$60,000 title in the 2007 2nd season Korea Pot Pool Tour Championship set Feb. 28-31 at the Lone Department Store in Incheon, Korea.

It will be the second major tournament for Alcano this year after finishing in the last edition of the 17th Annual All-Korea 9+9-Ball Open last week in Osaka, Japan.

Alcano, who vowed to take up his 6-game feuds in Japan, said Cordo Bilado sits scheduled to arrive tomorrow from Osaka.

The 34-year-old Alcano, achieved reduced by the US$ boost Billiards Digest magazine as "The Most Improved Player," will be joined by World Pool League champion Dennis Orcollo, reigning Asian champion Roberto Gomez and veteran campaigner Ramon Rafalico in the Korean event organized by the Dragon Promotion outfit is owned by Korean-American pool wizard Charlie Williams.

ALCANO

At stake is the top prize of $30,000 in the event which Alcano won in 2005. No tournament was held last year.

The 27-year-old Orcollo, who won two side events in the 2007 Derby City Classic in Kentucky, reached the round of 16 in the 40-Kamui Open while Gomez, a former TV reporter, is fresh from winning the 9-ball tourney in Korea. Rafalico, the runner-up of 4 in the 29-ball division of "The Battle of Scandinavia" in Oslo.

The event will feature 64 of the world's top players from the U.S., Korea, Sweden, Finland, and Japan, according to WPT president Cindy Lee.

—Marlon Bernardino, contributor

SPORTSWATCH

Stallions lead GMA-7 Xavier golf

THE STALLIONS, SHEPHERDED BY LAWRENCE CONRADO, SHARED THE early with 1-5 points after the first leg of the GMA-7 Xavier Elementary golf tournament at the Santo Rosa Golf Club recently. The Stallions and their first match-makers racking up three points each. Matches were led by golf scientist coach Tessie Tigan combined for 3 points and Kenny Ho then added with 2 points each for combined Team 10 Mix in the event organized by the Xavier School Batch 1975 for the benefit of the Xavier School Educational Trust Fund. Batch 72 of Team Dragons was in fourth position with 1.5 followed by Team DE and Team Cash Ed with 1 point each. Tournament chair Greg T. Yu said the finals will be held on Jan. 20.

Takbuhan ta Parokya ni Isko

THE LOURDES SCHOOL OF MANDALUYONG PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION is spearheading the Basketball Tadhakan ta Parokya ni Isko on Feb. 11. The event will also promote fund-raising for the LSM PTA projects like assistance to the St. Joseph Priesthood Seminary, Lourdes Mental School, president, and Puppet Lessons. Ka Ram Ram said the 500 million of LSM Parent-Teacher Association's Tadhakan is. The event features the LSM community 4-6 and 10-12 Years agencies all Free Tadhakan all to grant to elementary. Basketball for children and the LSM PTA Parent-Teacher Association's Tadhakan is 4 on 4 Boys 5-7 of the Lourdes School of Mandaluyong. Elder Basketball Academy officer hosts. Look for Mr. Ann Florencio Bagtasa at the event and grounds.

80 entries in Makati International Derby

A DOZEN MORE BIG TIME COCKERS HAS REGISTERED OVER THE WEEKEND for the fourth participation in the Makati Sports Club International Derby scheduled Feb. 3, 7 and 8 at the Makati Coliseum. Most notable among the eight-birds are Cockerhounds Georgie Angeles, an unemployed for the event 2007 World Number One and cooperator Manny Pacquiao. Derby Gallantry Pacquiao's Fighting Boys, Pilot Bill Mack, Raymond Sanz, Pedro Rigo and Rodolfo Rhonda also committed their entries. Others vying to hold their ancient grandfathers are Dick Fist and Jerry Colleen of Oklahoma, Roy Mendiola of New Mexico, Jerry Valencia of Iowa City, Indonesia, Jay Gentry of Louisiana, Jose Canada and Hendy Hall of Texas, Jonna Bonita of Kentucky, FL of the Indian Legacy, Joe Cayagan and Ricky Gutierrez of Cebu City, Richard Dyke of Arizona, Pedro Pablo Rendon and Randy Lagman of Hawaii. Call 890-4010 and 890-3040 Loan or Stephanie.

IJC International Derby finals today

THE SECOND-LEAD TODAY IN A FOUR-WEEKEND SHOW, SEVEN DAYS IT'S championship round today of the Jose Collegiate, with 50 individuals gunning for the 40-man participation of PF edition. The 2-day event featuring more than 118 fights start at 1 p.m. Among the top bracelets on the contest: Andrew Manalastas, Roy Nicolo, Mayor Nolasco, Arnold Santos, Mayor Eddie Abella, Boy Boys defending champion Ed Estrellado, hosting Jonna Money Pacquiao, Jason Campos and Gusty Mahinay of Alabama, Joseph Trinidad of Louisiana, 2002 Valedictorian Gay Gonzalez-Pacquiao Jamboree, John Wilson, Rudy Garcia, Danny Laguio and pitcher Bruce Bonaffin of Alabama, John Baldwin of Hawaii, Rudy Alfonso, Ray Boy "Boy" Bautista, Mayor Daddy Chatto, Rodolfo Plata and Manny Tanay, Boogie Dolan, Rudi Rudolph, Tony Boleon, Don Bo, Mayor dreamy Jun Mamaigan and Leader Jose Fox Inks. call (02) 725-5000 and (02) 725-5000.

NBC HEADS: Quezon Gov. Wilfredo Enverga (fourth from left) and NBC president Nathaniel "Toti" Padilla nab Quezon's early spot in the NBC with shareholders. From left are team manager Teddy Mijares, coach Angel Pereira, team owner Mark M. Enverga and Tito Palma.

Race 1—Clm, Apex Green (3), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 2—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 3—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 4—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 5—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 6—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 7—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 8—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 9—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 10—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Bill tackling major PSC changes may have to wait next year – POC

By Jose Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE may have to wait for the new administration before its appeal to install major changes in the Philippine Sports Commission could push through.

While the measure is left before the House of Representatives awaits its vote, POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. doubted whether the bill the Olympic body filed with Congress last week would be accommodated.

The POC through Rep. Renato Usano Jr. filed last week a bill amending and upgrading Republic Act 6847, the law that created the Philippine Sports Commission, the government arm for sports.

"We are pressed for time because the present Congress only has two weeks to wrap up its work," said Cojuangco. "There's no harm in trying so we filed it just the same."

Under the bill, the POC wants the PSC commissioners to come from a list recommended by the Olympic body.

The POC also wanted for a fixed tenure of six years for commissioners, are under asking that the chairman be elevated to the cabinet.

"We will try to push for it again after the elections. But knowing Congress, it will take time before the congressmen could tackle the bill," said Cojuangco.

"A reorganization within the House is bound to happen as the new set of congressmen takes over. If ever, it could probably be passed in January next year at the earliest," said Cojuangco.

Should the bill be shelved for the next administration, the changes in the POC would only take effect after the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

The latest blows to managing a joint committee hearing for the committees of youth and sports, appropriations and ways and means on Tuesday to accommodate the bill filed by the POC.

But even POC vice president Monico Puentevella expressed doubts that the bill would see its final run in the present term of the House.

"The biggest obstacle is the time constraints," said Puentevella.

Pacquiao doc helps Z, Boom Boom

Filipino 2 "The Dream" Gomez and Boy "Boom Boom" Bautista have rushed to one very important participant in the Angeles boxing who was lucky there after work some punishment some fight night on Feb. 24.

Dr. Ed De la Soja, the acclaimed/quiet master of the sun-roots investigations of sunburn, Ramon Magsaysay, will lend his expertise by letting them with their own set of investigations for their "Moment of Truth" bouts in Cebu City.

Gomez will challenge WBO super flyweight champ Rexson Tordillo, while Bautista will meet Feider Vilora.

Dr. la Soja visited the Wild Card Gym yesterday to watch Bautista spar against two very tough and very game boxers, a lefty—Filipino Ronald "Tapadora" Mendoza and Mexico Rosebedo.

"Boom Boom appeared to be in excellent form although he appears to say that he is over his fighting weight of 122 lbs. When I brought my observations about Boom Boom's weight to Eddie Alla Villanueva, he gave me a no-nonsense, straightforward answer: 'Not to worry, Doc Ed, we still have a few weeks to go before the fight. As his trainer, I assure you, on the weigh-in day we will be where we should be, 122 lbs.' Dr. la Soja said.

Dr. la Soja also witnessed Rexson Gym watch his cut and body Eddie Leal and a kid named Mike Franco.

"Gomez was very business. He took some hard shots but dished out plenty of his own. From my vantage position on the ringside where I was taking pictures, I can hear the grunts of Gomez' sparring partners every time he lands a solid shot, which, incidentally was very often," reported Dr. la Soja.

Gomez and Bautista will be fitted with new custom gloves this Sunday. Inden-Lagumbay Contributor

2 GOMEZ spars with Mike Franco.

Antonio-Sanford tops World Slasher

THE FORMIDABLE DUNDON of anchoring tide Patrick Antonio and Carl Collins-based Sanford Jan Sanford (Jul 19, Angeles Winning Line SSC) bagged the championship of the recent World Slasher Cup 8-Ball Championship Series at the Antonio Coliseum.

The Antonio-Sanford duo defeated 125-unit Sanford (Jul 19, Angeles Winning Line SSC) in the finals, 11, and Antonio (6, Bagio Chino (4), Pia Bell (12), Dasan Link 3).

Entering the finals with an edge against their opponents, the tandem of Antonio and Sanford never acknowledged the support provided by the Sanford Winning Line Team.

ATTACK Antonio (left) and Joe Sanford bask in their championship trophy

Race 1—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

Race 2—Clm/Str—Golden Tower (2), Tanduay Racing (8), Schemer Reserve (4), Jan Kevin Ray Mendoza (6), Tanduay Racing (8), The Magnificent (5), Schemer Reserve (4).

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Chess probe result out soon—Pichay

PICHAY

THE NATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION of the Philippines is expected to announce in the next few weeks the result of its investigation of the game-fixing scam and the penalties for the guilty players.

NCFP president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. said he would announce shortly concerns the NCFP board can refer to competing group from the beginning.

The board will hear the side of the accused. They will be given their day in court, and we will make sure that justice will prevail," said the Tanauan solon.

Meanwhile, International Master Jayson Gonzales, a member of the five-man investigating team, said evidence is strong against the eight accused players, based on the testimony from dozens of the 36 FC-Bib Cup, the National Inter-Provincial Tournament and the National Championship last month's tribunals.

Gonzales identified the players as International Master Ronald Dobles, IM Oliver Barbosa, NM Mariano Arnaldo, NM Eugene Torre, 12-year-old WIM Chinry Lamiel Bersabe, Jake Bellen, Stanley Labra and Mother Bayan.

IM Mark Paragua and IM Jonathan Angeles were not in the list. Gonzales pointed out, because they were those of last year's Fairmont Open cup and submitted.

However, NCFP executive director Jayson Samuel Eduno said that he would push for a probe of the Fairmont Open results, adding that he had a strong evidence against the guilty players.

The probe team is headed by NCFP tournament chair Willie Abalos with international arbiter Elmer Pelayre, national arbiters Elias Lao and Dietrich Lee and Gonzales as members.

According to Eduno, it would require a two-thirds vote of the 15-man board to declare a player guilty.

He said the players will be given 10 days to refute the charges even as he assured the tournament for the involved parties.

Meanwhile, Gonzales also denied the game-fixing charge, adding don't ready to prove his innocence before the NCFP board.

Also denying their involvement were Barbosa, Magno and Bellen. Torre duty impeller-bobber said he husband Ronald also was not guilty of game-fixing. Jessan Bersabe had also denied his daughter Chrisie Lamiel, Aberlan Bersabe, coordinator

FRANKIE MINOZA
Reliable reviewer

Open gets FG, ICTSI support

By Hanzay B. Cortillo

THE FIRST GENTLEMAN FOUNDATION OF JOSE MIGUEL ARROYO and the International Container Terminal Services Inc. of Enrique Razon are again putting up the $200,000 (around P10.9 million) prize money for the staging of the 91st edition of the Philippine Open next week at Wack Wack.

Organizers met last Wednesday to finalize the other details of the 80 Open, including the pro-am event scheduled on Tuesday, Jan. 30.

Present during the meeting were Anna Jose director for development Wack Wack Women Golf Association of the Philippines (WGAP) president Lourdes Mendoza, Wack Wack president Lee Tan, former president and Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Jr. and sports and games head Pedro Rosa.

Serving as the third leg of the year's Swing Tour, the four-day event will be held Feb. 1 at Wack Wack's Inland East course with $47,500 at stake in the winners.

Frankie Minoza, the Filipino legend who will play in the Open for the first time since 2002, leads the formidable local challenge that also includes rising Asian star Jarvis Yeoman and last year's Swing Tour winner Angelo Que.

Reportedly, ranked at the Tour's top rookie last season, is one 30-year-old tips to winning Asia's oldest national championship.

The 40-year-old, an excitable born Brahmin Bombol, has finished in the top 10 of each of the last four Opens and was in key contention for three straight years prior to last year when he debuted to a poor and fatal of path.

Scott Strange, a condominium trade long-hitter from Perth, Australia, is the defending champion.

Recent Asian number one Thaweesak Khamboon Koh Gloves of Canada, Phang Tze-chang of Chinese Taipei and Jabon Le Navarro of Australia are also entered.

Prominent women Gina Angeli, will be the key to winning the Open as the East course, one of the shortest on our being just 7,093 yards long, has the tendency to penalize errant shots well. At, can-limited hammering unpredictable bounces.

Pro-am tournament will also be a key to the event being supported by PLDT, Smart Communications, Philam Life and Coca-Cola Philippines.

Tinga Moto draws 6,000

Ang Liga Saturday

SPORTS

Sharapova, Williams set showdown

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—UNSEEDED AND RANKED No. 81, Serena Williams made it back to a Grand Slam final with a 7-6 (5), 6-4 win over Nicole Vaidisova at the Australian Open.

She will face top-seeded Maria Sharapova in the final, the 19-year-old Russian advancing 6-4, 6-2 later Thursday over No. 4 Kim Clijsters in the second semifinal.

Williams and Sharapova are 2-2 in head-to-heads—Williams winning their last encounter after erasing match point in the semifinals here two years ago before going on to win the title.

Williams, a seven-time Grand Slam singles champ, weathered Vaidisova's powerful forehands and gave back plenty of her own, sometimes surprising the 17-year-old Czech player with her speed around the court and the pace of her ball.

After leading 5-1 in the second, she needed six match points before sealing it with an overhead.

"Jubilant!" she said, laughing and celebrating the win.

"She played some incredible points on match point," Williams said. "She just got rebated. It reminded me a bit of myself. I just tried to stay focused and tried to stay calm—it was just great."

Sharapova overcame an early service break to dismiss Clijsters, who was only able to convert two of her 12 breakpoint chances despite the Russian making eight double-faults and 35 unforced errors.

"I saw those double faults come in at the wrong times. But somehow I managed to fight through and make the first serve when I had to," Sharapova said. "That was the key and I'm also going to be the key in the final.

Sharapova won at her best under pressure, fending off seven break points in the second set. She rallied from 0-30 in the first game with a pair of aces and three hard-fought returns.

Sharapova, the US Open champion, will be making her first appearance in an Australian Open final after two losses in the semifinals.

She said she was looking forward to a rematch with Williams.

"I'm excited for that. She came into this tournament without any expectations, and she is playing great tennis," Sharapova said. "To be in the final of a Grand Slam, that takes a lot of hard work. She's won many of these titles—I have a lot to catch up."

Clijsters, who could retire at the end of the season and plans to start a family, has lost four semifinals here and the 2004 final.

She gave Sharapova match point with a double-fault, and Sharapova finished it with a forehand winner down the line.

Williams has won two of her seven major titles at Melbourne Park and is one win away from her most improbable title.

In between her win here in 2003 and last year, Williams had not been in a top 10 player and dropped out of the top 100 at one point last year.

By reaching the final, she is expected to surge back into the top 20.

Williams broke Vaidisova twice in the second set but lost the No. 10 seed's ailed and won four straight games, serving four match points after being down 0-40 to hold the ninth game.

"I almost did a guacamole there," said Williams, explaining: "Basically, you know, gagging."

AP

MARIA Sharapova finds a way to get past her service woes to crush Kim Clijsters' farewell party.

WILLIAMS: I almost did a guacamole.

Federer Express destroys A-Rod

MELBOURNE—WORLD NO. 1 Roger Federer zoomed into a record-equaling seventh successive Grand Slam final with a straight-sets humiliation of American rival Andy Roddick at the Australian Open Thursday.

Federer was in a different class as he raced into his third Australian final in four years with a 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 romp in just one hour and 23 minutes.

It was Roddick's heaviest defeat in five Grand Slam matches with Federer, who now faces either Chilean 11th seed Fernando Gonzalez or German 12th seed Tommy Haas in Sunday's final.

Gonzalez and Haas play their semifinal on Friday.

Federer equaled the all-time record for consecutive Grand Slam final appearances of seven, held since 1959 by Australian Jack Crawford.

"Winning matches is the best thing, but to break records there's something you never dreamt of, it's fantastic and I hope I can keep it up. Everything is swell at the moment, I might as well take cheers along the way," Federer said. "I had one of those days where everything worked and I was unbeatable.

"It's just unreal. I'm shocked as it myself. The tournaments not over now yet, so let's not get carried away, let me try to do it one more time and then let's get all excited."

It stretched Federer's unforced errors out of matches to 39 and increased his record against Roddick to 15-1.

The American, who spoke of his gap closing with Federer before the match, was upstaged by the precision strokes of the incomparable Swiss.

Federer has coached the fast, rallies final without dropping a set in his six matches with American Michael Chang, the last man to do this in 1996.

The phenomenal Federer has only lost two of 129 Grand Slam sets/matches he has played to—the 2005 Australian semifinal to Marat Safin and at Roland Garros the same year.

Federer broke Roddick's serve in the first set but the American broke back in the fourth and looked good until the ninth game when his form suddenly deserted him.

The Swiss ace broke for the second time winning a furious rally at net and that served out for the opening set in 33 minutes.

It got decidedly worse for Roddick in the second set, losing every service game as Federer raced through to love in just 22 minutes.

Roddick's new strategy to come into the net more had little to zero results as Federer passed him with beautiful backhand winners.

The unsurprised was Roddick after his third service break in the set that he flung his racket off the court towards a photographer.

The exit had trials set in and Roddick again dropped his opening service in the third set as Federer relentlessly powered on and won his 11th game in succession when he led 2-0.

AFP

Manning plays coy about finger injury

INDIANAPOLIS—INDIANAPOLIS Colts quarterback Peyton Manning thrashed his way through questions about his injured throwing hand on Wednesday.

"I attended the Bill Belichick school of discussing injuries, so there's my answer," Manning said, thwarting laughter.

Belichick, New England's coach, is known for keeping the status of injured players secret, and Manning took advantage of a rare opportunity to do his own impression of the three-time Super Bowl winner by giving no update on his right thumb.

Manning, a two-time MVP kept track of his hands in his preform as he walked into a room confronted three days after hurting it in the AFC championship game.

The injury is a rare stink for the league's best-known ironman outside of Green Bay. In nine pro seasons, Manning has started all 156 career games, including playoffs, a streak that ranks second among NFL quarterbacks behind only Brett Favre of the Packers.

But with two weeks between his last victory and a Super Bowl date against the Chicago Bears, Manning's right thumb has suddenly become big news. He was injured against New England.

X-rays were negative on Monday, and he practiced on Wednesday. AP

Caguioa. . .

From page 4-11

two-game spurcade with the first till set in Pasbeg, China Sunday and the next match shined the following day in Incheon, Korea.

"That's a big honor for the PBA," said PBA technical head Rudy Meneses. "The coverage is that [the world's] biggest acknowledge the job and competence of the PBA referees."

Tiglao cases for Pasbeg last 27.

The PBA received the invitation from IOE official Hoon Sang Lee, in charge for technical matters of the annual event.

"To be invited in such prestigious undertaking by the IOE and the Olit is really a great honor," said Meneses.

Francis Odiaso

New year for Tiger, with some carryover

SAN DIEGO—AS MANY TIMES AS TIGER Woods has played and won at Torrey Pines, he has never figured out the patchwork shades of blue on the Pacific Ocean below the cliffside course. Looking out from the fourth green on Wednesday, his New Zealand caddie told him the darker the shade, the colder the water.

It was a fitting start to his 2007 season, starting as a reminder that repeated old and new, has blending.

The Buick Invitational is his first tournament of the season, but Woods earned over three last year a US PGA Tour winning streak that dates to July 1 he is going for his seventh to come on the tour, and adds set in his favor as the two-time defending champion.

"It is meaningful because it's not easy to do," Woods said, and he should know because he won six straight US PGA Tour events at the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000, the second-longest streak behind Byron Nelson's 11 in a row in 1945.

But he also doesn't consider it a real streak.

That ended in Dubai on October when he lost in the first round of the HSBC World Match Play Championship in England. Throw out match play and Woods was runner-up in consecutive weeks in Asia.

"It's a PGA Tour streak," Woods said. "It's not really a win streak because obviously, I lost at Match Play, I lost at the Ryder Cup, I finished second in China, I finished second in Japan. I was on a winning streak for a bit."

Also in contention are his emotions.

Gone is the dread Woods felt at Torrey Pines last year when he knew his father had only a short time to live, outplayed by the emotions of his wife being pregnant with their first child, due sometime in July.

"I'm looking forward to the year and what's going to transpire," Woods said. "Last year, I was not looking forward to the year and what was going to transpire. One is just praying and hoping, and the other is pure excitement and enjoyment. So it's two totally opposite ends."

He was lively during his pro-am, talking about the changes to Torrey Pines for the US Open next year, his dinner on Tuesday with San Diego Chargers running back LaDainian Tomlinson, and his wife's plans to finish out her spring season at the university.

The first step to his new year starts on Thursday against a 156-man field that is not as strong as some years, but looks stacked at the top with Woods, Phil Mickelson and Vijay Singh.

And while there is much talk about a streak, that tends to shift some attention to Mickelson, who has won three times on the PGA Tour this season. Mickelson's 2006 then was the first two events of 2006 to raise semester possibilities that Schwartz unwatchable record might be within reach.

The new step was Torrey Pines.

"We didn't get it, did he?" Mickelson said, turning to find his audience with a quizzical look. Lefty laughed heavy, hoping pulled away over the final six holes to end Woods' streak at six.

AP

WOODS: A lot to look forward to.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Mercado • Associate Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Gov't to liberalize forex restrictions

To address impact of excessive inflows, strengthening peso

By Dara C. Dandan

IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THAILAND'S RECENT move to curb capital inflows, the Philippines is set to liberalize existing restrictions on capital outflows as a way to hedge against the strong influx of foreign money while keeping its monetary policy steady for now.

Posting its regular monthly meeting yesterday, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy-making Monetary Board maintained its overnight rates for the 18th straight month at 7.5 percent for overnight borrowing and 9.75 percent for overnight lending and kept the trading spread that was revived since November.

Taking effectively a monetary easing, in a notion wherein the BSP goes a lower rate on overnight funds in excess of certain threshold levels to encourage banks to lend out instead of parking all their funds with the monetary authority.

Since the BSP introduced the trading system, some analysts said monetary policy had become less accommodating given possible price pressures from rising liquidity caused by heavy foreign exchange inflows from foreign portfolio investments and remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

But BSP governor said a package of measures to liberalize the capital accounts, focusing on the outflow side, was being prepared and would soon be presented for approval by the Monetary Board.

"We will be expanding to capital flows to their limit," one BSP source said. "We have to do something about the expected heavy inflows."

The source declined to say what measures were being drawn up, but other officials said the package would include the proposed changes to the overbought position limit for banks.

Stocks up 0.94%

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Petron plans to export to China, Vietnam /B2
■ Gov't raises non-tax revenue target to P115B /B3

Imports grew 13.4% to $4.51B in November

By Michelle V. Rarra

THE COUNTRY'S IMPORTS GREW 13.4 percent to $4.51 billion in November from a year ago, in what economists said was a preparation by businesses to meet an expected increase in consumer demand in the early months of 2007.

Merchandise imports in November brought the January-to-November imports figure to $47.36 billion, up 9.6 percent from a year ago.

Balance of trade in goods in the 11-month period hit a deficit of $9.02 billion, 56 percent lower than the previous year's $20.73 billion.

The trade balance is the difference between revenues from exports and expenses for imports.

But in the case of the Philippines, economic officials said an increase in imports meant that businesses, including exporters, were optimistic that do-

Brittany

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PetroEnergy group to spend $22.5M for drilling project

By Abigail L. Ho

Resource potential placed at 158M barrels of oil

A GROUP COMPOSED OF LOCAL and foreign firms will invest $22.5 million to drill 11 well within the Iloilo Prospect, formerly Cherry Prospect, in offshore Miagao.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, listed consortium member PetroEnergy Resources Corp. said the proposed well, or Iloilo 1, would be drilled by early June to March or April to a depth of 3,300 meters in around 160 meters of water.

The prospect has an estimated resource potential of 158 million barrels of oil, PetroEnergy chief executive officer Arturo Manthou said.

The cost of the drilling, he said, would be shouldered entirely by majority stakeholder Petroenas of Malaysia.

The other consortium members are PetroEnergy, PNOC Exploration Corp. and Basic Petroleum Inc.

Petroenas holds a majority stake in Service Contract 47 at 88 percent. PNOC-EC has 10.4 percent; PetroEnergy 0.6 percent, and Basic Petroleum, 0.2 percent.

The Department of Energy last month launched the Philippine Energy Contracting Round 2006 (PECR), a venue for interested investors to bid for the right to explore and develop nine petroleum blocks, 14 oil prospects and three geothermal sites located all over the country.

For new areas exploration, the DOE has identified nine areas spanning 71,317.5 square kilometers for development, including Cagayan, Central Luzon, two blocks in Mindoro-Cuyo, three blocks in East Palawan, Visayan Basin and Agusan-Davao.

In an earlier interview, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said at least one investor had expressed interest to bid for each of the nine oil and gas areas that were placed on the auction block.

In 2005, only four oil and gas areas were offered to prospective investors, two of which had got to be formally awarded to their rates all awaiting Malacañang nod.

For coal, the DOE is offering 34 sites with a total resource potential of 431 million metric tons (MT) for exploration, development and production.

Energy Undersecretary Rodolfo Antonio said in an earlier interview that each site would be composed of three blocks, with each block spanning 1,000 hectares.

Three sites are located in Quezon, Negros Occidental, Cebu, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur, Davao Oriental and Zamboanga Sibugay.

Petron plans to export to China, Vietnam

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF its foray into the Cambodian market, industry leader Petron Corp. is now eyeing the Chinese and Vietnamese markets for its lubricants and other products.

Petron president Khalid Al-Sultan said the company remained bullish about the export market, particularly as this had been a big factor in boosting the oil firm's bottom line during the past several quarters.

He said Petron was currently considering opportunities in Vietnam, as well as monitoring the potential of the Chinese market.

"But it all has to be economic. For now, we monitor the shipments to Cambodia for our lubricants. That's our first overseas market for lubricants," he said.

Petron is banking on a partnership with fuel additives firm Innospec Inc. to further boost its presence in regional markets.

Under an agreement with Innospec, Petron will be constructing and operating a $2.5 million blending plant within the Subic Bay Freeport by the end of the year.

The company said that under the 20-year contract, the Subic blending facility would serve the fuel additives requirements of Innospec's customers in the Asia-Pacific region, including Petron.

The diesel fuel additive guaranteed that Petron would be Innospec's exclusive fuel blender in the region, the company added. (Abigail L. Ho)

PLOT IN FORBES ASIA'S FAB 50
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. president and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno (right) received for the phone giant in award as one of Forbes Asia magazine's "Fabulous 50" companies, the only Philippine company to make it to the selection. Forbes Asia chooses the best out of Asia Pacific's about 900 publicly traded companies with revenue or market capitalization of at least $5 billion. In 2006, Forbes Asia pegged PLDT's sales at $1.11 billion and market value at $6.76 billion. With PAL Holdings as some of the other awardees who attended the recent awarding ceremony in Hong Kong.

GeoGrace expands mine base

By Daniel G. Lucas

MINING FIRM GEOGRACE RESOURCES Philippines Inc. has signed yet another agreement to expand its nickel mining base in Zambales, days after sending a similar teasing flight deal.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Geograce said it had entered into a memorandum of agreement with Superiller Mining Inc. to acquire the latter's rights over a 5,000-hectare nickel mining concession.

"Superiller's mining concessions are located in the towns of Cabangan, San Felipe and San Narciso," the company said. "It's chromite-nickel deposits are situated within the Zambales Ophiolite Complex at the eastern central segment of the province."

Earlier, GeoGrace inked an agreement with Geometric Mining Inc. to acquire 100 percent of its mining rights that covers 32,957 of nickel property in the towns of Cabangan and Botolan in Zambales.

GeoGrace is listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange and was formerly known as Global Equities Inc.

The deal brings GeoGrace's acquisition of nickel mining concessions to 16,000 hectares in the last few days.

Nickel is the main element used in producing stainless steel and is used mainly for industrial concerns.

The value of nickel has risen sharply in recent years due to strong demand from countries like China and India.

Subject to the completion of the due diligence and the valuation of the Zambales mining rights, the parties have the option to enter into a share-for-property swap agreement wherein will sell for the issuance of new GeoGrace shares in favor of Superiller in exchange for the mining rights.

The parties can also opt for a share-for-share swap deal where Superiller will issue new shares to the shareholders of Sagittis in exchange for 100 percent of the firm's total outstanding capital stock.

Similar provisions cover GeoGrace's earlier deal with Geometric Mining.

GeoGrace recently formed a joint venture with Australia's Navion Mining Ltd. to develop mining projects in the Philippines through a similar deal.

GeoGrace said the partnership with Australian Stock Exchange-listed Navion Mining involves a share swap deal between the two companies.

The deal includes the purchase by GeoGrace of up to 100 percent of the total shares of Nu-Asia Strategic Investment Holdings Corp. (Nu-Asia Holdings).

In exchange, GeoGrace will pay the subscription by way of cash, shares or mining claims that may include areas in Surigao, Bukidnon and Zambales province.

Filinvest prices $203-M offer at ₱1.60 a share

FILINVEST LAND INC. AND FILINVEST ALAbang Inc. have priced their FLI common shares offering worth $203 million at P1.60 a share.

One of the 5.4 billion common shares, 3.7 billion will come from FLI. This is expected to raise gross primary proceeds amounting to P5.920 billion to $128 million.

FLI has offered 1.7 billion existing FLI shares for sale also at P1.60 each.

FLI has granted FDR, BC, its lender underwriting agent, an option to purchase up to 809.85 million additional shares at the offer price, to cover allotments.

The offer price represents a 5.8 percent discount of the volume weighted average price of FLI in the Philippine Stock Exchange during the 10 trading days ending Jan. 19, 2007 at P1.699.

Some 95 percent of the total offering was allocated to international investors, and 5 percent to PSE brokers.

The transaction is expected to close and the new shares are expected to be listed on the PSE on Feb. 8.

FLI's portion of the net proceeds of the offering will be used to finance its development projects in 2007. FLI has budgeted P5 billion in capital expenditures for this year. P3.7 billion of which will go to residential development and P1.3 billion will be spent for office development.

Imports grew 13.4%

... from page B1

mand for their products would increase in the months ahead since a significant portion of the country's imports are raw materials for finished export items.

"It is a good sign when imports of raw materials and intermediate are rising, up from an increase in production in 2007," said Dennis Arroyo, director for policy and planning at the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

The National Statistics Office reported that electronics now still the biggest import for November, accounting for $2.16 billion, up 8.4 percent year-on-year. Electronics imports are composed of raw materials for electronic goods, both of which are for export.

Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials were the second-biggest import for November, accounting for $783.6 million of the total import bill.

Other top imports for November were transport equipment, $258.55 million; industrial machinery and equipment, $158.88 million; iron and steel, $93.23 million; manufactured goods classified chiefly by material, $79.74 million; plastics, $75.74 million; miscellaneous manufactured articles, $73.23 million; iron and steel, $69.98 million; chemicals, $69.8 million; and telecommunications equipment and electrical machinery, $65.85 million.

The United States remained the biggest source of imports at $448.1.6 million of the total import bill for November. Japan followed with $687.95 million.

Other sources of imports for November were Taiwan, Singapore, China, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates.

Stocks

... from page B1

3,324.53 and 3,292.84.

The broader all-shares index was up 17.00 points at 2,016.85.

Gainers beat losers 70 to 34, while 65 stocks ended unchanged.

Total turnover was 2.2 billion shares worth P4.4 billion.

Dealers said strong fund inflows chased select blue chips led by market heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and SM Investments Corp.

"There's not much money chasing two few index issues at the moment. Foreign investors are evidently very bullish about the Philippines, and their interest extends to issues outside of the main index," said James Lugo of Macquarie Global Equities Inc. AFP

Gov't raises non-tax revenue target to P115B

New water sources eyed

MANILA WATER CO. has identified two catch basins as alternative interim sources of potable water to meet the increasing demand for water in the east zone of Metropolitan Manila. These can also serve as backup in case of any breakdown in existing facilities.

MWSC, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), is looking into the development of the Laiban Water System which will harness the Katon and Kaliwa Rivers in Tanay, Rizal and the Pantabangan Water System which will involve the rehabilitation of the Binga Dam. Binga Dam was Metro Manila's source of water in the 1900s prior to the completion of the Angat Water Supply Optimization Project in the 1990s.

Under the plan, the new water sources will be developed jointly by the two MWSE companies to ensure the sustainability of supply to Metro Manila. Currently, Angat Dam is the sole major source of raw water, harnessing water from the Angat River in Bulacan. Any serious damage to the facilities of Angat Dam brought about by natural occurrences can jeopardize water supply in Metro Manila.

By Philbelle F. Baroo

BOC, BIR tax collection goals for '07 lowered

THE GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED its non-tax revenue goal this year by P20 billion to P115.6 billion.

According to the Department of Finance, this will compensate for the adverse impact on tax collection of the declining interest rate and slowdown in inflation.

It also said the government would continue its divestment program for this year by maximizing the use of its assets.

Non-tax revenues are composed largely of proceeds from privatization, fees and charges collected by government agencies one of the delivery of services, and income generated by the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr). BTr income includes dividends of the national government from its shares in state-owned firms and investments in foreign-denominated securities.

The government has set a target of limiting its budget deficit this year to only P62 billion, lower than the P125 billion ceiling set for 2006.

This year's target was anchored on the assumption that the Bureau of Internal Revenue would collect P789.1 billion in taxes and the Bureau of Customs would take in P220.1 billion worth of import duty collection in cash collect.

But the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), which sets numerous economic targets, lowered the revenue collection goals of the BIR and the BOC.

The downward revision was based on a study that showed the potential foregone tax revenues arising from macroeconomic developments, including the fall in interest rates and slowdown in inflation rates.

A slower-than-expected inflation means prices would be lower than anticipated. This results in the lower collection of value-added tax by the BIR. The drop in interest rate reduces income generated from bank deposits, which therefore undermines tax collection.

The DBCC also said the strengthening of the peso would bring down the collection of import duties by the BOC.

A finance official said that while appreciation of the peso, decline in interest rates and slowdown in inflation have positive effects on the economy, these also adversely affect the government's tax and duty collection performance.

"The BIR and the BOC are victims of the positive macroeconomic developments," the official said.

The BIR's revenue collection target was revised to only P765.9 billion, while that of the BOC was reduced to P108.1 billion.

Making technology profitable: Jatropha

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

THE ALYANSA AGRIKULTURA, composed of 62 federations and organizations covering all major agricultural industry sectors, has identified profitable technology as its major thrust for 2007.

Among the key technologies the Alyansa is advocating this year—aside from COMMENTARY

the hybrids of Rice (intensification 100), organic farming, and sustainable community-managed fishery systems...is jatropha cultivation. Ursula Raymundo, Alyansa president, said that by "profitable technology," we are targeting the establishment of 100,000 hectares of land-cropped newly planted jatropha between coconut trees in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Raymundo has already made an investment for 25,000 hectares of land of the Coconut farmers of Southern Leyte (Coland) led by Emil Lavilla and Rudy Jusay in Hinundayan, Southern Leyte; 30,000 hectares, Tandaya Plantation and Enrico Pamplona and 2,000 hectares of Sarangani Geo-Oil Rice Reforestation of Agricultural Cooperative (Solar) led by Aric Medrano in Saga, Surigao del Sur.

Why Jatropha?

Jatropha cultivation was considered an Alyansa Agrikultura priority because of its high positive impact on millions of poor farmers. In the coconut sector alone, this means 3.7 million coconut farmers and their workers.

Aside from looking at other lucrative uses of coconut and taking advantage of the recent strong demand for virgin coconut oil, the best way for a poor coconut farmer to improve his life is have cropping crops such as cacao and coffee.

But farmers can benefit greatly and, therefore, positively as investment. It is easy to grow, even on barren land. Jatropha also has a big market demand, because it is a raw material source for biofuel.

As for potential income, Raymundo says "In one hectare, 25,000 plants yielding 1 kilogram of jatropha nuts each can be grown, in the prevailing P1.0 per nut, this would be P25,000.00 a hectare. But in some places where the nuts sell at double this price, it is P50,000.00 a hectare!"

Small: Beautiful but dead

However, the jatropha cultivation technology may end up in loss or rather than profit if a business system methodology is not used.

As far back as 1981, we did a survey which showed that potentially effective technologies used by farmers in a "small but beautiful" approach ended up in massive failures. This was because each individual farmer unqualifiedly acted on his or her own, without looking at the complete need to shell out business system using resources of scale.

The correct methodology, later identified as the "anchor approach," proposed that an anchor group with an anchor project is needed to help manage the production and marketing of several farmers producing the same product, using resources of scale.

Just imagine several farmers using jatropha cultivation technology effectively, but not being able to sell the nuts profitably because there is no processing plant in the area to absorb the nuts. Or farmers producing and finding a very strong demand for these nuts, but not having the seeds to grow the jatropha to fill his demand.

Anchor applied to jatropha

The first necessity is to find the correct economies of scale production level to make a jatropha business globally competitive and profitable. In my literature search of the jatropha program in India, which has been going on for a decade, the optimal economic scale of one jatropha cluster is 2,000 hectares. This is what it would take to justify the setting up of an anchor processing plant that would provide the market for the jatropha nuts.

In addition, the anchor group should also set up an anchor nursery to provide the farmers with the appropriate seeds and cultivation technology to ensure the quality and consistency of the nuts delivered to the plant.

This approach is absolutely necessary to make the jatropha technology profitable.

Centro Saka is helping organize the 2,000-hectare Gandara Multi-Farmer cooperatives. The Coconut Industry and Investment Fund (CIIF) led by Emilio Quisumbing is providing the funds to set up the processing plants and the nurseries, as well as looking for competent business managers for the anchor groups. Though jatropha can be planted in places other than coconut lands, the business infrastructure in using the anchor approach is already in place with Centro Saka and the CIIF playing their respective critical roles. For more information on this, please text or call Bryan Bogan at 0917.820.5026.

(The author is Agrisearch chair, former Cabinet secretary for Peasant Arenas' Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry. He majored in and supervises, email agrisearch@philonline.com or telefax (02) 4922123)

For RP, '07 is turning into a make or break year

By Howard W. Dominguez

FOR THE PHILIPPINES, 2007 IS turning into a make-or-break year, according to the World Bank's director for the Philippines.

If the country hopes to become part of the rapid economic growth in East Asia, then the government will do well to continue and sustain infrastructure-related reforms, WB director Joachim von Amsberg said.

Speaking before members of the Makati Business Club, Amsberg said infrastructure must be the focus, even taking it as key to greater inflow of investments that will drive economic growth.

"This window of opportunity created by fiscal reforms [may be missed] through the implementation—one step at a time—of good policies that are already in place, and which do not have structural obstacles," von Amsberg said.

He said such reforms would include continuous efforts in the power sector, construction of roads and waterworks projects, any one of which hopefully could be a showcase of public-private sector partnership.

"Unregulated areas in adequate vehicle competition is possible and regulation may be done, so long as there are clear rules that would be implemented consistently," he stressed.

Also, Von Amsberg again cautioned the government from becoming too complacent with the foreign exchange limit, currently at the lower of 2.5 percent of unimpaired capital or $5 million which is lower.

• Increasing the ceiling on resident purchases of foreign exchange for investment abroad, currently at only $5 million.

"However, it is uncertain how rapidly these would work to stop the peso appreciation and stabilize money market rates," Credit Suisse said, it added that the BSP apparently no longer considers the exchange rate rather than short-term interest rates as its operating target.

BSP Officer-in-Charge Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the BSP views were misinformed because there were "sufficient grounds for caution," given the uncertainty in oil prices and the risk to food prices posed by the El Niño dry spell.

Gov't to liberalize . . .

From page B1

ties or the amount of dollars that banks are allowed to buy from the spot foreign exchange market.

In a commentary dated Jan. 23, economists from Credit Suisse said monetary policy in the Philippines "is likely to remain hamstrung by the challenge of managing capital inflows, which may prompt the authorities to remove the pressure by liberalizing capital outflows."

These possible measures espoused by Credit Suisse to be adopted by the BSP as part of this liberalization were:

• Simplifying documentary requirements for buying foreign exchange for current account transactions (only transactions worth $5,000 and below are exempted from the tedious requirements);

• Raising banks' overbought positions (or the amount of dollars that banks are allowed to buy from the spot foreign exchange market).

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Growth Fund - Peso	1.00000	1.00000
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.2007	1.2001

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BUSINESS

Int'l investors see RP to be 'flavor of the month'

Country places second only to China in terms of viability, group says

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE RISE IN INVESTMENT GRADE in the Philippines has drawn the attention of investors keen on putting their money here aside from China, according to Universal LBP Corp. (ULC), managing fiduciary and chief executive Eli Lovin.

ULC is a consortium composed of Asian Transportation of France, the world's second-largest transportation system provider; Ansaldo Signalling of the United States; Builder Assist LLC, representing Ideal Investment Corp. and PentaCapital Management Corp.; the Manila Pacific Capital Inv. Group; Earth Tech, a member of the Tyco International Group of the US; Engineering Equipment Inc., a member of the Vachetti Group of companies; Egi Engineers; IL International Holdings Group; and a group of listed investors.

ULC is the top contender vying for the $1,100-billion Metro Rail Transit 7 (MRT 7) project that will connect Tala in Caloocan City to San Jose del Monte in Bulacan province.

Lovin yesterday told reporters that ULC hopes to launch the bid of 12 other parties for the MRT 7 project. The parties include Japanese, UK, European and South Korean firms, as well as a "non-Chinese group, with maybe $100 billion a year in turnover, and a big appetite for investments."

He also said the ULC group is keen on further investing not only in infrastructure projects but also in telecommunications, energy and agro-exports from Clark.

"The investment climate is good, with the improving economy and increasing interest in development," Lovin said.

Other projects have expressed similar views.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce yesterday said in a statement that the country's vast human and natural resources are drawing more foreign investments (FDI) and foreign direct investments, "which were hardly even heard of in the last decade, have reached a mark of over a billion dollars in the last five years."

The country's largest trade organization also said that India has been showing a lot of interest in the Philippines as bilateral trade between the two countries reached around $700 million last year.

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Bank says RP credit upgrade long overdue

By Michelle V. Baron

INVESTMENT HOUSE DE BELEVE THAT THE Philippines deserves an upgrade in its credit rating.

"Frankly an upgrade in the Philippine sovereign rating is long overdue," Singapore-based DBS said in its latest analysis on the Philippine economy. "We were among the first who recognized the improving trend of fiscal finances and its positive impact for the [peso]."

DBS said the government's success in containing its budget deficit and reducing its debt, had served to improve its credit image.

Last year, the country's sovereign ratings have been below investment grade.

The ballooning budget deficit in the past had taken its toll on the country's credit rating. Also, recent gains in the fiscal front only led to an improved credit outlook.

A credit rating is normally used as a guide by investors in making investment decisions. An upgrade in a country's credit rating positively affects investor sentiment, thereby reducing interest rates on its sovereign bonds and ultimately the government's cost of borrowing.

Moody's Investor Service rates the Philippines at four notches below investment grade. Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings both assigned to the country credit ratings that are three and four notches below investment grade, respectively.

But due to macroeconomic developments in the country, the three international ratings firms decided to revise their credit outlook on the Philippines from "negative" to "stable."

A "stable" outlook means that a country is secured from any credit rating downgrade in the short term.

The rating agencies revised their outlook on the Philippines after the government managed to reduce the budget deficit, and implemented several revenue-enhancement measures, such as the increase in the value-added tax rate.

"The government has fulfilled the condition set by ratings agencies to raise government revenue as percentage of GDP [gross domestic product]," DBS said.

While the country's credit ratings have not changed, foreign investors have already begun factoring in the macroeconomic developments in the country to their investments.

"In any case, we are glad that the markets have made appreciative of these efforts, as witnessed by strong equities, lower bond yields, and record low credit spreads," DBS added.

Top players vie for slice of RP mining action

By Christine A. Gayfran

FIVE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST MINING companies are now in the Philippines, hoping to get a slice of the local mining action, government and industry officials said yesterday.

The firms—Phelps Dodge, which recently merged with Freeport McMoran, Anglo-American Holdings Plc., US-based BHP Billiton, Swiss mining firm Xstrata Copper Ltd., and Canadian number Chemical Vapor Metal Refinery Co. (CVMR)—are now engaged in negotiations for possible joint venture projects, according to Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo V. Reyes.

"The major players are now here ... In truth or in the anticipated boom of the Philippine mining industry," Reyes yesterday said.

Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez said that this development was due to the "dynamic ... unchanging policy support of the government."

Romualdez pointed out that in the last quarter, the DENR carried out drastic changes to streamline the bureaucracy and improve services to the steel sector.

"This has prompted us to push through with the Asia-Pacific Mining Conference in May ... the very same conference we postponed last year," he said.

Last week, Reyes said, the DENR approved the exploration permit of Manila Mining Corp. (MMC).

Anglo-American Plc. through its local subsidiary Anglo-American Philippines Exploration Inc., is finalizing the joint venture agreement with MMC for the exploration of the Siocon Copper-Gold Project in Zamboanga, Placer in Surigao del Norte.

Anglo-American is listed in London with mining operations in different parts of the world.

Anglo-American has committed to spend an initial $10 million for exploration work over the next two years.

BUSINESS Friday

Hit markets for 2007

What active senior citizens, affluent young executives and the masses will buy this year

By Karen V. de Asis
Contributor

WHILE CHINESE HOROscope experts and mainstream soothsayers debate the outcome of the Year of the Boar, nothing beats a close study of Philippine macro-socio-economic trends to predict which markets may grow, businesses likely to prosper, products that will sell and customer segments that will become responsive to product and services.

Here are 10 sectors/trends expected to show good performance in 2007:

Grey market

One, the grey market and age-defying products and services. A Global AGEWATCH report released on November 2006 revealed that today's 60-and-older are perceived to be the new middle age. The findings was based on a comparative survey conducted by the organization in 40 countries worldwide.

This comes as no surprise as seniors today do not think chronological age in general. Unless extremely tired or depressed, older people do not feel their age. They also believe 60 is considered a new lifestyle. With results of the economic situation, no pension, availability of health supplements, a new attitude toward a healthy lifestyle and take care of their time, many elderly Filipinos are often living a productive work and family life and as an added bonus, this whole set looking their age as 50 years old.

However, the biggest challenge for them is how to enhance their memory and reduce their incidences of senior moments to sustain their productivity life. Thus, beyond silver hotlines, Geriatric specialist, body sculpting, exclusive surgeries, the product sessions heavily campaigned for memory enhancement pills, memory games for seniors and brain calculations sessions to more accessible senior-designated places.

On a lighter note, the seniors are an alluring market for younger brands. Simultaneously

MasterIndex of consumer confidence reveals continued optimism in Asia-Pacific

MARKETS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION remain fairly optimistic about the first half of 2007, according to the latest MasterIndex of Consumer Confidence survey by MasterCard. The semi-annual survey showed consumers in the Asia-Pacific region were optimistic that six months as well as a year ago.

The index of consumer confidence (64.1) has risen from six months (57.9) and a year ago (57.7), and is above the historical average (60.2). Consumers were most optimistic about regular income (75.4), followed by the economy (62.4), stock market (61.7), quality of life (61.7) and employment (60.4).

From a regional point of view, India is likely to have contributed to an improved consumer sentiment as indicated by declines in crude oil prices and strong performance of the stock markets. Country-specific factors included the election of a new prime minister in Japan and its highly positive bounce in points on business confidence, and the ousting of the former prime minister in Thailand.

Two of the 13 Asia-Pacific markets have seen an improvement in their consumer confidence levels from six months ago. Vietnam continued to be the most optimistic market (92.7), followed by Hong Kong (80.6), Singapore (62.5) and China (61.2).

In the Philippines, consumer confidence has recovered from the very low levels in 2005 and has turned marginally optimistic. The current Philippine MasterIndex is 57.2 was a further improvement from 51.9 six months ago and 28.9 a years ago and is closer to its historical average of 60.1. While consumers were less all optimistic, they remained still uncertain about the economy (46.7), employment (49.0) and quality of life (42.4) where sentiments were still slightly pessimistic.

The positive outlook of consumer confidence for the first half of 2007, however, has to be viewed in the context of a widely expected slowdown in growth in the United States, and possibly China, two key drivers of economies for Asia.

"Many markets across Asia Pacific are still heavily dependent on exports. But exports have contributed more than domestic demand to economic growth in recent years in most Asian markets. There is a need to build a more robust domestic market. Consumer sentiment is fairly optimistic in this first half of 2007 but things might change quickly to the second half of the year if growth slows sharply in the US, leading to a decline in export demand for Asia," said Fares Hedrich-Klerag, economic adviser for the Asia Pacific for MasterCard Worldwide.

The latest MasterIndex survey, the region's most comprehensive and longest running consumer confidence survey was conducted from Jul 31 to 31, 2006, and involved 13,400 consumers across 13 key Asia-Pacific markets. In its 14th year, the bi-annual survey tracks how prevailing consumer perceptions of economic conditions affect the six-month period ahead. The survey ranging between ages and 100 are based on responses on five variables: employment, economy, regular income, stock market and quality of life.

The MasterIndex is calculated based upon percentage response figures, with zero as the most pessimistic, 100 as most optimistic and 50 as neutral. The survey has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level.

Guerrero is first Cannes Lions jury president from SEA

GUERRERO

LONDON—DAVID Guerrero, dean and chief executive officer (CEO) of Asia Pacific Philippines, has been appointed as the year's Radio Lions jury president, the organizers of the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival recently announced. David is also the first Cannes Lions jury president from Southeast Asia.

David founded DDB Philippines in 1990. Under his leadership, it has consistently been ranked as one of the top advertising creative agencies, and is currently Agency of the Year in the Philippines according to Campaign Brief Asia, which has also named David as one of the region's top 10 creative directors.

David won his first radio award while a student copywriter in London. When working in Hong Kong, where he was a creative director for worldwide campaigns for Coca-Cola Asia-Pacific, David won a case radio trophy at Hong Kong's Media awards. After moving to Manila he contributed to the book "Cutting Edge Radio" and served as chairman of the country's first radio awards jury in the medium.

David has chaired juries at the Asia Pacific Adfest, the Melbourne Art Directors Club and served on four year's Radio Lions jury. He has won awards at all the major shows, including Radio in Cannes, Clio and the Gunnel Prix in London International.

Launched in 2005, Radio Lions honors the best international country radio advertising. The aim is to raise its profile to the high standard that has been reached by the other competitions held in Cannes, elevating and recognizing radio as an important element of the media mix.

The 54th International Advertising Festival, the Cannes Lions, will be held from June 17-23, 2007 in Cannes, France.

It is the last great gathering of worldwide advertising professionals and advertisers as well as the most prestigious awards advertising awards. Each year, over 20,000 entries from the advertising and allied industries around the world to celebrate the best of creativity across all media disciplines. Entries are judged and awarded with one statuette. Over 25,000 ads from all over the world are discussed and judged at the festival. Winning companies receive the highly coveted Lion trophy honoring the most creative TV commercials, print campaigns, outdoor, online, interactive, integrated advertising, as well as the best media and direct marketing solutions.

For further information, please visit www.canneslions.com or call the London office on +44-20-7240 4040. Any media queries, or e-mail to pressdesk@canneslions.com

Home-based entrepreneurs with worldwide reach

By Raquel P. Gomez

HENRY GRIA, A FORMER INVESTMENT adviser who suffered a stroke seven (7) years ago, says his biggest fan on his road to recovery is his wife, Cecilia.

He began selling his collection of stamps. Perhaps his entire income in past staying in a corner of his room.

Full-time mom and wife Ate Cecilia Cardas started selling her piles of books on eBay and soon her a network of friends who chimed with her a steep love for books.

Judy Guiano-Lavea left a high-pay, high-stress call center agent in Manila to become a full-time mother to three children in Subic. To combat the boredom of staying at home, she engaged in a lucrative business of selling designer bags, apparel and toys to eBay.

More than two years since eBay, the world's largest online marketplace, was introduced in the Philippines, a number of Filipinos got hooked on an "eBaying" and become instant online entrepreneurs.

JAY CANLAS (right) and (left) other eBay hosts/sellers whom she meets up at SM.

Emerging entrepreneurs

These emerging Filipino internet entrepreneurs are part of eBay's worldwide community of individuals and businesses selling goods and services online. Ebay's US million users worldwide, who are trading at least some 40,000 categories of products and services, have incredibly spawned a global e-commerce.

A startup and casino collector, Gina started initially on eBay Philippines as a buyer. Because of a stroke, he was compelled to stay at home and his wife, who was the breadwinner, began the habits of frequenting online casinos. Initially on eBay sites, at one point his casino purchase amounted to 350,000 a month and this made him think about selling stuff online to recoup some of his investments.

Gina has about half a million stamps in his collection, many of which are rare and in pristine condition. With the help of a photo scanner provided by his daughter's boyfriend, Gina started photographing his stamps on his eBay store and successfully sold his entire of "bits on" labeled stamps. Gina says this buyer became a repeat customer who has bought a total of P120,000 worth of stamps.

Some Ebay customers entered many buyers from abroad. Memorable buyers include a guy from Germany who placed bids on hundreds of German stamps. Another Russian guy bought P12,000 worth of "Ramon Aiten" stamps. A Japanese guy bought coloring sheets worth was significantly less than the cost of transporting the stamps to Japan. He considered the transaction including the 25 percent service charge by the bank to Spain for the benefit of the Philippine Ebaying Union Philippines. One stamp buyer from Cebu, out of gratitude, even brought Cinta, Gina's favorite.

Gina's success usually post payment through Western Union, E-Gold, and bank deposit. The best eBay has yet to expand Paypal, credit cards, or other secure payment services. Some eBay sellers resort to other methods of payment.

Life changing

Gina says his eBay experience has changed his life dramatically. He says despite his condition he feels empowered financially having the capacity to help in shouldering some household expenses.

"If you're a homebound person and you want to earn money, you can sell online. The advantage of selling online is like having a store that's open for 24 hours and there are still no charges etc."

Downside

Judy Guiano-Cardas sometimes feels a pain of her to losing values every every time she has to part with an old book or a buyer. A book lover and collector since a child, Cardas says dealing with a lot of book that feel become part of her childhood is the only downside to her now chosen field of selling books online.

Cardas has been selling books on eBay Philippines for almost a year now. Her store, Bookstall, which sells secondhand books; Bookstall2, which sells classified and children's books, and Strictly Classics, which focuses more on rare books. All her stores or eBay sites have more than 100 as positive feedback scores.

Determine honesty

They explains the feedback scores are helpful buyers and sellers determine the honesty of the members.

"People are encouraged to be honest with their dealings because of the feedback scores. You get to know if a person is honest or not through the feedbacks."

In setting up her online stores, Cardas like all other merchants, such as setting up the terms and conditions of the purchase and even putting designs on the website to make it more appealing to browsers. On the average, she places about 100 books per store. She can just imagine Cardas' humor which looks more like a stockroom with piles of books spilling over to her bedroom.

She says she has read almost all the collections. "If someone took on a book I haven't read, I read it right away."

Addicting

Managing an online store has become an addicting activity to Cardas who stays at home all the time. "I can still raise nights. "When I wake up, I'm the first thing I do. Before I order at night, it's the last thing I do. It's a 24-hour store, and you can see people bid and sealed even in the wee hours of the morning. You can see this number of people who don't sleep at night."

Cardas says she has witnessed some buyers bidding action happening on her site when she took by Susan Blanchett Philips she posted with an initial price of only P140 went up to P1,200.

Within months of "eBaying," Cardas has forged rewarding friendships with other online booksellers and buyers. Some of her clients in the province provide her with a list of books they want and send her personal. One buyer from Batangas has constantly scrapped books and stores with her. Cardas also meets up with other eBay booksellers for a cup of coffee at SM Megamall.

A former writer for a magazine, Cardas says getting an eBay has led to an "adventure," allowing her to meet new people and to cope with circumstances such as encountering bad-to-please buyers. She did give out a couple of negative feedbacks to people whom she considers bad buyers.

"Online selling is engaging, fun and one-to-one meeting isn't it kinds. Ebay is a place where one person's trash is another's treasure."

Trusting buyer

Judy Guiano-Lavea remembers with kindness one customer from Dipolog City who bid on 100 pieces of Alaw. Overtime thirty hands two months after she opened her eBay site Bookstall2. It is hard to say.

"Being new and with hardly any feedback score to back up my reputation, I was surprised that someone would trust me with their big amount of money," says Lavea.

Lavea gets her items from a cousin in law who owns and manages a four repair in Olongapo. She happily says that she has recently reached the "powerseller" status having accumulated more than 100 feedback scores.

"What's funny is I could be like good? I was while being a stay-at-home mom."

Although a number of Filipinos are engaging in e-commerce, thanks to eBay and other online selling sites such as Our local and low-tech Bidbid, e-commerce has yet to take a significant foothold in the Philippines.

According to the software internet worldstats.com, the Philippines is among the lowest in this in terms of Internet usage or penetration. According to the site, the country has more than 7.8 million Internet users, representing only 8 percent of the entire population, with majority of them concentrated in Manila and belonging to the A, B and C classes, age ranging from 15 to 30 years old.

Hit markets for 2007

From page B/1

se properties) study revealed that men preferred brands that were more familiar, and valued much of mouth endorsements from friends and family. Men were less inclined to be impulse buyers and were not likely to spend a lot of time shopping. Because men are rational buyers they appreciate packaging labels that carry clear information that would help them make a decision about the product or service.

Home office

Seems, home office and spa by performance workers and home-based industries and portable business equipment. Home and work-life balance drives the home-office trend. Both men and women are working from home to attend to family responsibilities or between work.

Pink market

Right, the pink market and the real estate, leisure, hotel and entertainment industries, cosmetics and body sculpting industries. Male aesthetic enhancements are seen like a badge by the male metrosexual. But it is not the only category that benefits from this group of hard-working, high net worth individuals. Self-indulgence and family relationships show equal billing in the pink market's priorities. They have strong preference to discord on men, women and couples and even some healthcare categories.

Eco-friendly products

Here, socio-economic advocates and ecologically products like biodegradable and plant-based products, green electronics, organic pharmaceuticals and clothing. As world consciousness about the importance of preserving the natural environment and addressing issues about global warming, reducing toxic waste, managing energy use, recycling products, etc. cities, more and more products and services will be introduced and marketed precisely on this platform. Eco-friendly products and services are certain to thrive in the future as governments around the world are pressured to preserve the role of the environment in the interest of human survival.

Commodity items

Yes, commodity items and the products mainly mass market. It is true that where 90 percent of the market has a household income of roughly P19,000 (US$0.) and below, there will always be a market for commodity products and services, largely price brands, even inelastic. Because the lower-income consumers carry likely appealing and casual than

the original branded items (without the pricing level of the original charging items tend to appeal to the middle class, etc. e.g. local fast-food meal to place of Mcdonalds. Yummy Tim or second grade cosmetics versus the first-tier brands) are a lucrative story.

Every New Year is a year of opportunity. So long as the market has been identified, profiled and its needs are served, each year will usher in a good if not excellent business.

Feedback at fabio.ong@abs.net.ph or www.ise.ateneo.edu/abs

RP to leapfrog Asia on call center growth

Country to beat major China, Singapore, Malaysia

By Noe T. Olalondo

THE PHILIPPINES WILL BEAT CLOSE neighbors Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore in terms of call center growth, due to its workforce prospects like India, a market center watcher said, and China, an emerging marketer with extensive workforce and very cheap services.

This, according to the 2006 Asian Contact Center Industry Benchmarking Report conducted by outsourcing advisory firm Stratbi's leading call and contact center research and publishing company.

Conducted among 747 contact centers in the Philippines, India, Singapore, China, Malaysia and Thailand, the study covered the operational and financial performance of these contact center clients in terms of staff and tech gaps (Source: Stratbi) assessed contact center strategy, operations, human resource management, technology, customer service, channel management, outsourcing, key performance indicators and management challenges.

All roads lead to growth

The study estimates that the total $76,000 seats in the country's market would increase to 794,000 in 2007, a growth rate of 25 percent from last year. The majority of Asian contact centers (56 percent) are dedicated to customer service, 15 percent to outbound sales, 14 percent to technical support, 11 percent to inbound sales and two percent to collections.

Singapore's 19,000 seats and Malaysia's 20,000 seats are both projected to grow at 32 percent. China (180,000) will grow at 22 percent and India (270,000) at 15 percent. Thailand is projected to grow by 20 percent but it only has 24,000 seats now.

The Philippines, meanwhile, has 406,000 seats and is projected to grow 33 percent this year to 540,000 seats.

How do we get there?

Callcenters.net president Dr. Gerardine Wallace says we need not look further than our own shores, but local contact centers must wrestle with challenges in human resources, disaster preparedness, and technology to be competitive.

"Growth in the contact center industry in Asia was traditionally driven by the outsourcing sector. Now we are seeing strong growth not only by the outsourcers, but also in contact centers serving domestic markets," Wallace says.

"In the Philippines, 70 percent of the industry services the local market and 30 percent provide international service."

The study said growth in the industry is also reflected in strong technology purchasing and upgrading plans for Asian contact centers. Up to 84 percent of Asian contact centers plan to purchase new contact center technology in 2007 and 62 percent are also planning to upgrade their existing technology. About 79 percent of centers in the Philippines intend to purchase new technology in 2007.

The top three contact center technologies to be purchased in 2007 will be voice over Internet protocol or VoIP, workforce management and call recording systems, says eTalk marketing chief Roger Woolley.

"The outsourcing sector appears to drive growth in innovation and technology adoption in the region, and that, again is led by the Philippines," Wallace says.

"Given the near growth rates of over 30 percent for our Unified Contact Center business in the Asia Pacific region, The trend toward Internet protocol (IP)-based contact centers is driven by a highly competitive business environment and increasingly technology customers who are demanding greater interaction," says IC Soh, Cisco director for collaboration marketing in Asia Pacific.

"The Dynamited contact center is the way of the future," Wallace says.

Continuing search for the extraordinary

WHAT IS EXCELLENCE? THE WORLD IS FULL so often that its meaning has somewhat lost its luster. Excellence isn't merely being the best in the field; it is a choice of loosing the odds no matter how high the stakes and of surpassing the unpredictable outcome of the moment and the outlayer.

For 20 years, the Metrobank Foundation has used excellence as a call to arms in the search for the individuals who have made it. Their life's mission is to go above and beyond the call of duty from teachers, scholars and promising nonbusinessmen, to policemen and women, soldiers, and budding young nation scientists, the Foundation has seen the significance of these outstanding Filipinos could be won to country and has given them the recognition they deserve.

In its quest to discover and recognize these renaissance men and women, the Foundation has established programs that have become a benchmark among corporate foundations. The Search for Outstanding Teachers, The Country's Outstanding Police in Service, The Outstanding Philippine Soldier and the Bayo-dunay Art and Design Excellence have honored and recognized those who have devoted their lives to their craft while giving substantial contributions to their respective fields. But to forget the youth, the College Scholarship Program and the Metrobank Math Challenge have brought out the potentials of the youth, most of whom are now making their mark in their respective fields of work. These programs are over a period of three decades—making a difference and molding their country proud.

Through the years, the Foundation has become an active proponent of corporate social responsibility. It is the organization's commitment to build a partnership among empowering society and helping to countrymen realize their fullest human potential. But into the Foundation apart from other social development players.

Leaders with vision

"It is our belief that a country can only develop fully if its citizens are given the opportunity to attain their greatest potential. This can only come about if the citizenry has a synergistic environment which put a premium on achievement, and if people's efforts are buttressed by a culture of excellence," noted George SK Ty, chair of the Foundation.

His determination and long term vision is blueprinted in honoring the present accomplishments of international standing visionaries in his pursuits and commitment of fostering companies that are responsible corporate citizens making meaningful contributions for the economic and social development of the communities in which it the Bank serves.

The Foundation was also fortunate to have the guidance and wisdom of Placido L. Mapa, Jr. whose long career in the Bank has helped the Foundation mature into what it is today. Current "Chito" Salinguhan serves as the president of the Foundation.

Pioneering excellence in a sea of life is the legacy the Foundation cites give Filipinos becoming outstanding individuals for their contributions to pursue the highest standards in their professions as well as personal lives and who serve as examples of dedication, competence, integrity and professionalism.

Soap making course in UP Baguio on Feb. 3

THE GOLDEN TREASURE HERBS AND DEvelopment Program will conduct a one-day seminar on soap making in Baguio City at the Auditorium of the University of the Philippines, along Governor Pack Rd. on February 3 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are: coconut oil saponification, curing. There will be a hands-on experience on how to make liquid dishwashing soap, liquid hand soap, liquid all-purpose soap, bar detergent soap, herbal bath soap (papaya, lubanzan, citronella, oatmeal, etc.), powder soap, floral cremes on how to make liquid bleach, tile and bowl cleaner, lubricating oil, car cleaner.

For questions, call 02-952-46-28, 63-439-78-26; 02-951-29-46; and 02-913-69-51.

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The Great Rr Free Festival Offered to all Mandala Residential Farm Estates Reservation Holders Extended up to January 31, 2007

FILINVEST

BUSINESS Friday

Seven resolutions for marketers in 2007—Part 2

Stop being fooled into buying awards to build your brand

APOLOGIES TO OUR READERS FOR THE delay in publishing the second and last part of this series. Here it is! Thanks for your patience.

So a marketer, why not involve in...

No. 5. Build your brand by putting many firms and resources into Public Relations.

Resolve to: read The Sell of Advertising and The Hit of PR by Al Ries and Laura Ries. A controversial book that was—or still is—a wake-up call for an advertising industry obsessed with winning creative awards. PR practitioners, of course, love every page of that book.

Why put more money into PR? Ries and Ries build the case that PR builds brands because it is more credible than advertising. People tend to believe the stories they read or hear more than the advertising that "interrupts" their reading, viewing or listening. Here's Al Ries' advice:

"Over (the last) several decades, advertising has gotten more expensive at the same time as there has been a dramatic increase in the volume of advertising. These two factors make advertising less effective (too much volume) and less efficient (too expensive.)

Advertising agencies have responded to this problem by de-emphasizing selling and emphasizing the creativity of the advertising. As long as everyone was aware of a company's advertising what difference did it make if nobody bought the client product, went the thinking. Selling is not our problem, said the advertising industry. Creating awareness by creative advertising is what we are all about.

Advertising has many advantages: You can reach exactly the right people at the right time with the right message as often as you want to reach them.

But advertising has one major problem. Advertising lacks credibility. People just do not believe what they read (or see or hear) in our advertisement. They recognize the fact that advertising is self-serving. When you say about yourself has little or no credibility. Concentrating on the credibility problem, of course, is the solution of advertising. Consumers turn off most advertising because there is just too much of it. In many ways advertising is like spam on the Internet. It's not believable because there is too much of it and the messages are self-serving.

Public relations or PR has many closed categories. You don't control the media, you don't control the timing, and you can't control the message. But it has one major advantage: PR has credibility. Consumers tend to believe what they read in the editorial pages of newspapers and magazines and what they hear on radio and television from independent people. It's what we call "the (third party effect." What editors say about you has credibility.

PR and advertising can work together. Use PR first to create credibility for the brand. Then use advertising second to reaffirm and reinforce that credibility.

We recommend that your companies (seven new brands with PR only). This raises the brand has awareness and credibility in the mind, the company can switch to advertising to maintain the brand."

No. 6. Stop being fooled into buying awards to build your brand

Winning awards for your company or brand can be very good PR for you. But it's easy how thousands of companies, both large and small, can be duped into buying awards. In the past year or so, we've seen good reputable companies withdraw from prestigious awards because the dubious logos of such awards that were previously sold to them.

Other "entrepreneurial" dealers, determined to make a quick buck, have joined the bandwagon of selling awards. In the past few months, we've been getting faxes and calls from these dealers congratulating us on our "outstanding business. Now would we mind paying the "joining fee" to participate in the awards program? Ha, ha, ha.

Legit or just moneymaking?

Because of the current proliferation of these business and marketing awards, a good number of our marketing friends have asked: "Is this award legit?"

It pays to do a little checking into the award giving body, company or so-called "business" before joining. Many bodies do organize awards for both fund raising and recognition but are definitely legit. Take, for example, the Ole advertising awards in the 15 or the ncw Awards that accompany the Philippine Ad Congress. Every entry pays a fee that isn't exactly cheap. But participating ad agencies don't seem to be bothered and no adverse negatives are heard about the awards organizers. Of course there are awards where the entries do not pay but are instead "paid" to those nominees who win as in the case of the most prestigious award in the world: the Nobel Prize (Winners get a $100 check). The Ramon Magsaysay Awards, known as the Nobel Prize of Asia, does the same. Getting back to the check in the envelope, TIME Throw are the "Superbrands of Awards." Their traveling carries the name of their founder who is known and acknowledged for his or her life of excellence and professional and personal values.

Awards for sale

We've received some concerned calls from company heads and marketing professionals who have been receiving what look like generic form letters from awards programs or partners. The letters inform them that, based on consumer survey' their brands have been selected as a winner in a category. Some of these cheapest brand/marketing award/promotional campaigns then ask for a P15,000 to P50,000 award support fund/subsidy. The "leading" solicitor of such awards for sale has a team of account executives. They in turn "sell" thousands and thousands of awards on a local/regional and national level and take awardees to shell out at least P15,000 for a plaque and the right to use the award logo on their marketing collaterals. Do the math—that's a cool P1.5M for every thousand awards that you give!

According to one respected but skeptical marketing professor the difference is that these awards programs inform you that you have won already and to participate in the awards program and to include your brand name in the subsequent advertising and promotions, all you need to do is return the contract that accompanies the letter and payment together with your "support fund" or "subsidy." "What they are doing are selling awards to companies!", says the marketing professor, at who received several awards confirmation letters for his brand but refused to pay the award subsidy/fund that was asked of him.

No. 7. Keep on learning

We always end our Marketing101 New Year's resolution's with this one and are we to return to change or replace it, as a marketing executive, you must have a personal growth plan to be a better, more effective, marketer. Keep on reading the best and latest books, journals, and articles on marketing. Go back to "school" by attending marketing seminars and conferences here and abroad. Marketing is one of the most challenging careers that is ushered by constant change. To rely on what you learned about two years or a year ago is treasure to fools. Keep on learning and you'll have a really prosperous new year!

Joyfheck or Marketing@pjh2000.net. God bless!

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Bassi-Formoso
Contributing Editors
Jessi Epperson
and Appiko Alberto-Guillermo

Make space

LWD

THE LITTLE WHITE DRESS, or LWD to me, has always been a fashion mirage. I've seen it many times in past collections, but it has never really hit its style crescendo—until now. This time, it seems, the LWD has staying power.

In pop-culture history, certain unforgettable icons have elevated the LWD to a very, very fashion statement—even more than its dark counterpart, the little black dress.

Think back to old Hollywood. Who can forget Marilyn Monroe's immortal pose in "The Seven Year Itch," in her seductive, body-hugging white number? Or Elizabeth Taylor's youthful glow in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"?

Fast forward to a few decades later in the celebrity sphere, to that episode of "Sex and the City," where Carrie Bradshaw strutted down busy Manhattan streets looking like a fresh-faced summer angel, carrying a white umbrella to give her style statement an exclamation point.

Even though the little black dress will always be a favorite of mine, and has been my uniform for so long, I am embracing white as the color of summer for this season.

White is perfect for accentuating sun-toned skin! But I'm not even fond of the frilly eyelet or ruffled white dresses, for those are more part of the bohemian trend that just won't die (even if I think its official demise is long overdue!).

What I love is a crisp white shirtdress paired with a metallic or a colorful belt to tie everything together.

Myth about the LWD: Some believe that white makes you look bigger, or that it's just too much. Not if it's cut right and the color is the same.

JMD/CI

Jessi Epperson

Iconic Little White Dresses

ELIZABETH Taylor in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"

SARAH Jessica Parker as Carrie Bradshaw in "Sex and the City"

MARILYN Monroe in "The Seven Year Itch"

I see the light.

White spells volume

LWD

Make space in your closet for the Little White Dress

Classics contest

Hitting pretty

From page C1

A little style tip: Since white acts as a canvas, whatever color you use as an accent is where your eyes will go. So if you want to accentuate your face, a colorful lapel or necklace will do the trick.

If you have a small wardrobe, wear a bold-colored belt. Like a painter's canvas, the little white dress is your blank space that you can easily personalize with your choice of accessories (my jelly bean-colored shoes and bags!).

The 2012, like its black and red counterparts, has evolved today into a variety of styles each that wearing one once is a far cry from becoming a fashion faux pas.

Given that, who says you have to follow that old saying "you can't wear white after Labor Day?"

Updated styles

The semi-bare styles today are modern cuts for an updated look. Choose dresses that are above the knee, draped or with clean lines. Voluminous styles also add a touch of femininity.

One white hot designer who is in tune with the modern style is Debbie Co (cell. 0917-8334470). Her celebrity clientele includes Gretchen Barretto, Angel Aquino, Cheska Garcia and IC Connexion.

In fact, Co is becoming such a household name that every time I visit her studio, Champ Inocencio, a celebrity, office worker, debutantes or brides-to-be. This just means that women of all shapes, lifestyles and walks of life love her designs!

Debbie Co took up Fashion Design in 2004 at LaSalle International. She then went to Central Saint Martins in London in June 2005 to take up intensive fashion design courses.

Before she left, she had her pieces consigned in Inky, Soak and Soles, under the brand Athe Eight.

When she came home in November 2005, Ze Scamp in Greenbelt 5 and Shangri-La Mall started carrying Athe Eight.

It was also around that time when she was able to get shop space in Jupiter Place in Makati.

Atelier Debbie Co is her first shop, which opened late in February 2006.

On this spread, the spotlight is on Debbie Co's modern take on the little white dress. Echo's emerald-hot strapless and the luxurious Louis Vuitton accessories.

The word is out—the little white dress is now officially big. It's about time we started seeing white!

E-mail the author at jbolano@inquirer.com.ph

Urban goddess

Photography Tom Epperson
Styling Jessi Epperson
Clothes Debbie Co
ZP Jupiter Place,
Chi Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati City
Bags and accessories Louis Vuitton
G/F, Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City
Shoes Bata
G/F, Glorietta 1, Ayala Center, Makati City
Model Grace Taylor
Makeup Claire Sevilla-Dizon
for She Divine using Revlon
Hair Rick Dizon using Kiehl's, Sophia Serino

STRIKE a pose in a retro-inspired beaded maxi dress and a sexy brown 'do.

COMPLEMENT rich brown hair with an easy-to-wear satin slip dress and chunky jewelry.

Brown beauty

By Jacquie Gil

...ultimately micro-active conditioning formula that's made of nutri-protein vitamin E and olive protectors that illuminate colored hair from within through a three-step system—Step 1: shampoo to illuminate color more; Step 2: conditioner to nourish colored hair for extra shine; Step 3: leave-on to seal in the shine all day long.

Needless to say, a woman's crowning glory definitely boosts up any outfit. So, let your fabulous brown hair shine to get that exotic, earthy style that's extra hot this coming season!

The range of Joanna Colour Shine System is available in three variants to address different popular hair colors: auburn light brown, dazzling shiny black and vibrant burgundy.

Email the author at ajhalim@inquirer.com.ph

MATCH a sexiest black-and-blue dress that has shoulder-ruffled accents, with elegant brown tresses for an interesting study in contrasts.

Photography: Victor Cruzado
Styling: Pam Quiñones
Hair and makeup: Sir George Salon (Mary Pauline Group)
Model: Mona Liza of Look Models Philippines

Brown beauty

GO for an editorial mood with shiny brown trousers, a mini-tunic chiffon spaghetti-strap dress and black pumps.

KEEP it casual with a pleated halter-top paired with white shorts and a silky tie scarf on hands.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

KEEP white spaghetti-strap dress and look simple and sexy with silver big bronze locks.

THIS COMING FASHION season, go for a look that's natural and exotic with the use of soft earthy hues and nude tones—not just in your choice of clothes, but in your skin and hair color, too!

Play with soft palettes of vanilla, caramel and chocolate that are perfect for lazy summer days. Beats of brown as you dot, pierce with light and feminine details. Mix and match mild with shades of cheerios and cinnamon that flatter warm complexions and provide a radiant glow.

To complement your choice of hue, why not get a fun and color your hair? Now you never your look and opt to color your skin are fashionable statements, after all. If the rage last season was deep black hair and a milky complexion, this summer is definitely about golden skin and warm, brown hair.

As you embrace your naturally radiant new look, not to mention new hair color, add dazzling shine to your colored tresses with the first-ever color-enhancing hair-care range from Joanna Colour Shine System.

The revolutionary Joanna Colour Shine System is specially formulated to take care of color-treated hair the right way. It adds volume and shine while nourishing and protecting colored hair from the damaging effects of some coloring chemicals, without adding or depositing color.

Joanna Colour Shine System also has a re-

BROWN/C3

bench/

Wear Your Conscience

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
JUN DE LEON

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SA AKLAT SISIKAT FOUNDATION, INC.

LIFESTYLE

BLOOMING cosmetics formulated for very sensitive skin. Lipstick in sensor is Frosted Pink (P350), very similar to Chanel's Brown Sugar for blacks and tanners. Dual-use dry powder foundation in Ivory and Blush in Real Pink

Reasonably priced beauty clones

THE FEATURED PRODUCTS ARE NOT necessarily dirt cheap but they are a bargain compared to the originals I fell in love with that one or creating me one month. (I) me hardly available so I have to order them abroad, or worse, (I have since been discontinued, which is driving me insane.

While the holidays, most men no sensible (hermaphrodites by buying something that makes them feel pretty, like a tube of lipstick which they can carry around for a quick pick-me-up.

Avon Beyond Color Plumping Lipcolor SPF 15 (P436)—This moisture-infused wheat, removes dry dead skin and hydrates unpaired area, thus eliminating dry lines and giving the skin area a plumper, line-free appearance. The SPF 15 protects lips and the creamy matte texture creates lots of pigment with staying power, while the natural prevents chapping.

I was told these shades during Christmas. Although I was sold on the formula, I fell in love with only one shade—inexplicably. It's a replica of Lancôme's Matte Mirage lipstick that I used to wear daily during the early '90s but has disappeared since. I can only describe the shade as rounded burgundy rose petal or Arnelle's Sensitive turned creamy matte.

The other two shades I tried are Chili (an bright orange-red) and Party Pink (loud bright pink). I will request for more shades and will let you know.

Call 8642900 for Metro Manila residents or toll free 1-800-2866 anywhere in the Philippines. E-mail beliefpink.ph@avon.com.

New discovery—Everything in the Blooming makeup range costs P350, but the anti-aging is very similar to Clinique's great solution and MAC as it does not look cheap. The main asset is that everything was formulated by a dermatologist who collaborated with scientists to create the sensitive line.

Dr Mary Ann Bercasio formulated the eye shadows, foundations (with and dual), pressed powders, blush and lipsticks for herself and patients who suffered from asthma of the skin. The shades were very limited but I was pleased with the ones I found a match with.

The dual (wet-dry) foundation keeps oil at bay and offers flawless coverage when new; it gives a sheer natural finish. The pressed powder has SPF 25.

There are only three shades of lipstick which are all beige or brown-based, so they would blend with most skin tones.

The one that caught my eye was Frosted Pink which, when applied, looked and felt like Chanel's Rivera Rogue—a glossy brown shimmer with red undertones. Instead of smelling like rose petals like Chanel, it had a vanilla scent and, it kept my lips moisturized long after the color was gone. It can only be bought at Jim Blooming Skin & Cosmetic Surgery Center at 3017 Taft Avenue, QC (tel. 3743483 or 4341550).

Yummy but non-full-range—I more about bouncy on the lips but will not endorse liquid The Face Shop's Delicious Lip Gloss gives lips a sheer tinted color as it contains more pigment than the usual gloss. It also contains Dona-syrup cozy shine, making lips look fuller and eliminating all lip dryness. It only comes (99) and is flavored.

My favorites are: 13 Blueberry flavored (a lavender shade that gives lips a natural pink tint); 06 MOR (caramel-flavored (an Angelina Jolie nude beige type that makes lips look a lot fuller because of the shade and shimmer plus (I looks like my favorite coffee); 07 Cocoa flavored (a brown-based pink with gold to shimmer an enhances nude lip shade and tastes like (what else—chocolate!).

Want chocolate on your body as well? Try The Face Shop's Cacao extract Sweet Body Exfoliator and Cleanser at P320 each. They smell like the real thing and leave my skin silky smooth.

The word spells through my bathroom for hours after the shower and it comforts me to no end.

When I diet, I always struggle with my chocolate and sweets addiction, and I have found that smelling chocolate, coffee and vanilla to high amounts stops me from grabbing the real thing and chewing it in my mouth.

The latest body line has Body Oil (P945), Body Cream (P525) and Moisturizing Body Spray (P445) for those who really want the smell to last. (But I opt not to use the latter unless my skin gets very dry or the weather gets pretty cold.)

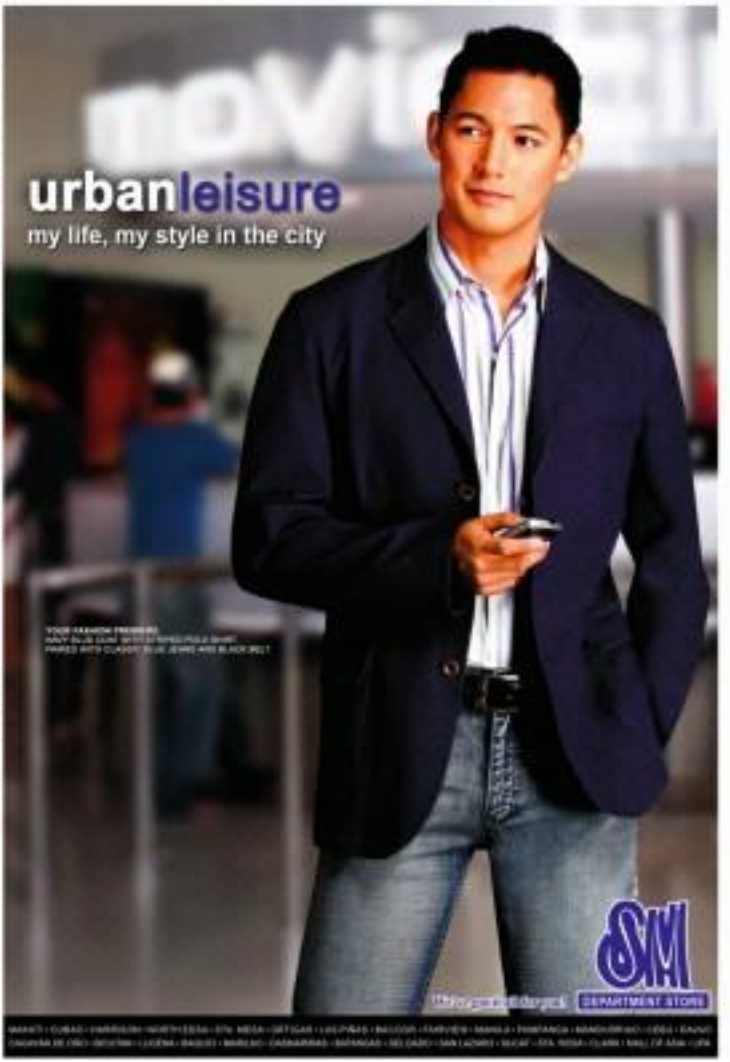
These items can be found in The Face Shop boutiques at Glorietta and SM Mall of Asia.

E-mail thefaceshop@yahoo.com

MAKEOVER 911

Kenny Sudex

THE FACE Shop Sweet Body Exfoliator and Cleanser



EDNA Kim, PNA-UK chair; Marina Castillo, PNA-UK vice chair; Dr. Remy Reyes, PNA-UK honorary vice president; and Elvie Sotto Jones, Middleham Catholic Girls Boarding School trustee

TERRY Conway, Dona Perez, Chris Zavitsanos, Alana, Michael and Irene Perez, Rob Cope, and Gemma Perez

UK-based Pinays do country proud

LETTY Ayesta is an Ateneo Alumni Tutor

FE MS Hermosisima and Tere Secretary and Carmel Lee Hermosa Lee

PHILIPPINE Ambassador to the Court of St. James Edgardo Espiritu and wife Lydia B. Espiritu

MAINSTEDHE Adrian and mother Maria Miller Jardine

Ralph, Rodrick and Ruby Adrian

JANE and Alan Gibbs

LIZ and Brian Mandeville

ALL ROADS THAT LED TO the ivy-lace Ole Café Royal Hotel at 68 Regent Street in London, where the 11th anniversary celebration of the Filipino Pioneers Association of United Kingdom (PNA-UK) took place at the elegant Empire Napoleon ballroom, converged.

But two adorable newcomers—Elizabeth Richardson, an active pioneer and one-time of the Chartered Town Planner in London, and Rosemarie-Ann's grandson Natalie Perez, PNA-UK assistant treasurer, yielded up to the Royal Garden Hotel at Kensington High Street in London, where we were ushered. We arrived promptly on time for cocktails at the foyer of the hotel before we sit down dinner in the ballroom.

"E (PNA-UK) is no longer a newborn organization but a full-fledged, kind-and-hearted association for its transparency and consistency in its aims and goals," said Richardson.

Richardson, the president of PNA-UK, explained to me during the excellently prepared 10-course dinner that the club was founded in April 1995 by a core group of Filipino nurses and doctors, mostly living and working in the UK, and that the first years of PNA-UK was led by none other than the internationally renowned socialite and charity seeker, Imelda "Imee" Quinsay, widow of the late ambassador of the Philippines of St. James, Jose T. Quinsay. She was succeeded by Rose Gomez Hendy Gray.

PNA-UK is a non-political, non-sectarian, and non-governmental organization "established to promote a balanced image of Filipino women that will emphasize their important contribution to society both in the UK and in the Philippines," Richardson said.

"E is an active member of the Pioneers Council of Great Britain and maintains close association and cooperation with other London-based Filipino groups."

The membership increased under the first chair, Dr. Remy Reyes, now one of the six honorary vice presidents of the association. The other honorary chairs are Nanette Bautista-Gutierrez, Lolit Bautista, Glydna Bugaila, Barbara Ardana and Richardson.

The executive committee is the policy-making level of the association.

A charity-driven association, PNA-UK is led by Edna Kim, who concurrently serves as an advisory board member of the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in London.

Other officers are Marina Castillo, vice chair; Dr. Remy Reyes, honorary vice president; and Elvie Sotto Jones, Middleham Catholic Girls Boarding School trustee.

Also serving as trustees are Dr. Rosemarie-Ann Perez, Dr. Ma. Teresa Ramos, Dr. Ma. Teresa Ramos, Dr. Ma. Teresa Ramos